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STARS AND STRIPES®

stripes.com

Volume 77, No. 219 ©SS 2019

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2019

平成32年4月5日 第三種郵便物認可 日刊(土曜除く)
発行所 星条旗新聞社 〒106-0032 東京都港区六本木7丁目23番17号 定価 ¥50

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GAO: Pentagon debt collection needs overhaul

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

A congressional watchdog has criticized the Defense Department's debt collection procedures, saying it needs to do a better job of informing servicemembers of their rights when told they owe the government money — often through no fault of their own.

The Government Accountability Office found problems in a review of dozens of debt notification letters sent to military personnel, according to a report published last week.

Letters did not explain servicemembers' right to reviews and written decisions on the matters, or their right to inspect and copy records related to the debts, among other issues, the report said. Often, the military services' policies and procedures involving debt collection were not current, complete or clear, and were applied inconsistently, the GAO stated.

As a result, servicemembers "may not have been properly notified of their debt, their rights to dispute it, or the potential consequences of inaction, such as involuntary payroll deduction," the report says.

Last year, Congress tasked the GAO to study the Pentagon's process for recouping overpayments made to military personnel. The direction came after the Pentagon decided to waive more than \$190 million in disputed enlistment bonuses and other payments for California National Guard members.

About 17,500 soldiers were faced with paying back hefty bonuses given to them in error between 2004 and 2010 by recruiters under pressure to meet enlistment goals during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

The Pentagon said at the time it would review its process for collecting erroneous payments after it was criticized for using tax liens, wage garnishments and other aggressive tactics to try and get the money back.

SEE DEBT ON PAGE 4



PHOTOS BY FELIPE DANA/AP

A U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces fighter stands atop a building used as a temporary base about a kilometer from the last land held by Islamic State militants in Baghouz, Syria, on Monday. Hundreds of ISIS fighters are surrounded in a tiny area in eastern Syria.

From caliphate to courtyard

ISIS militants in Syria reduced to final stand or surrender

By SARAH EL DEEB
Associated Press

BAGHOUZ, Syria — The collection of tents was largely silent on a sunny winter Monday afternoon. Few people were visible, but the few out and about were calm. Two men in long robes and pants walked slowly together through the grass; a woman leisurely came out of her tent to look around; a man on a motorcycle drove toward the river.

This is the last speck of land held by Islamic State — a patch along the Euphrates

■ **Struggle for survival desperate inside last corner of Islamic State**
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River in eastern Syria where an estimated 300 militants are mixed in with hundreds of civilians, refusing to surrender and trying to negotiate an exit with the U.S.-backed forces surrounding them.

SEE COURTYARD ON PAGE 7



An SDF fighter waits to be taken to an advanced position near the last land held by ISIS militants in Baghouz, Syria.

MILITARY

Congress restores funding for Coast Guard icebreakers

By SCOTT WYLAND
Stars and Stripes

Congress has restored more than \$650 million in funding for new Coast Guard icebreakers that Homeland Security had diverted last year to build a border wall with Mexico.

Funding for the service's first new heavy icebreaker in 40 years, which military leaders say is vital in competing with Russia and China in the Arctic region, is part of the \$333 billion spending bill Congress approved and President Donald Trump signed last week to avoid another government shutdown.

Under the spending package, the Coast Guard will receive \$655 million to begin building an icebreaker to replace the aging Polar Star — its only working heavy icebreaker — and \$20 million more to begin buying materials for a second such vessel, lawmakers said last week.

"With the support of the administration and Congress, we plan to build a new fleet of six polar icebreakers — at least three of which must be heavy icebreakers — and we need the first new Polar Security Cutter immediately to meet America's needs in the Arctic," the Coast Guard said in a statement to USNI News.

The back-and-forth funding reflects Washington's divided politics, which has seen the longest government shutdown in history — 35 days — as lawmakers wrangled over the border wall, one of Trump's key campaign promises.

The GOP-controlled House last year approved diverting \$750 million earmarked for icebreakers toward building the wall. But most Democrats, who took control of the House after last fall's midterm elections, oppose the wall.

The legislation that restored most of the icebreakers' funding was part of a bipartisan effort to avoid another shutdown and fund the government through September. It cleared both chambers Thursday, though House Republicans largely voted against it.

Voicing her support of the measure on the Senate, West Virginia Republican Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, chair of the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, said the funding for the icebreakers is critical to homeland security.

The new funding will help build up a capability that enables the U.S. to maintain "defense readiness, support the enforcement of treaties and other laws needed to safeguard both industry and the environment, and protect U.S. sovereign interests in the High North," said Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., chair of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Various nations are eyeing the Arctic region with greater interest as a warming climate melts ice caps and opens up access for military, commercial and research vessels. Even as the ice caps weaken and shrink, ships still must carve out passageways.

The Coast Guard currently has one operational heavy icebreaker

and one that is inoperative. Both have exceeded their 30-year service lives. The service also has a medium icebreaker and a research vessel with light ice-breaking ability.

This fleet is minuscule compared with the 40 icebreakers Russia has amassed. Moscow has raised alarms by declaring plans to expand its Arctic domain.

"Russia has claimed natural resources and territories in the Arctic that exceed its international rights and is investing in ice-capable military assets to back up that claim," eight House lawmakers said in a letter last year.

China, which aims to create an Arctic trade route known as the "polar silk road," has two heavy icebreakers and plans to acquire more.

The Arctic region is believed to hold an estimated 13 percent of the world's untapped oil reserves, 30 percent of its natural gas and vast mineral resources, according to U.S. Geological Survey estimates.

"This is about national security — we need to protect our territorial sovereignty against Russians and Chinese encroachment and safeguard our access to commerce," said Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, D-N.Y., chair of the House Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation. "We haven't commissioned a new Polar Security Cutter in over 40 years, but that's going to change thanks to the funding bill — it's long overdue."

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NICK AMEEN/Courtesy of the U.S. Coast Guard

The Coast Guard cutter Polar Star was designed more than 40 years ago but remains the world's most powerful non-nuclear-powered icebreaker. Congress has restored funding for more icebreakers.

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PACIFIC

Defector from N. Korea talks summit strategy

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korean leader Kim Jong-in will never give up nuclear weapons but may agree to reduce production facilities in exchange for sanctions relief during his upcoming summit with President Donald Trump, a prominent defector said Tuesday.

Thae Yong Ho, one of the most senior diplomats to flee the communist state, said Kim's strategy is to persuade Trump to essentially accept North Korea as a de facto nuclear power.

If you take out nuclear weapons, what else do they have, nothing," he said at a press conference in Seoul, adding that the regime sees them as essential to its survival.



Thae

They are trying to tip the extremely uneven scale when it comes to conventional weapons compared with the United States and South Korea," he added. "No one in the world can persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons."

He said the bellicose rhetoric in the months before nuclear talks began early last year was part of that effort, but he insisted Pyongyang never intended to go to war.

"That strategy worked," Thae said. "Unfortunately, President Trump fell into this trap."

North Korea will expect to see a partial easing of international sanctions during the Feb. 27-28 summit in Vietnam, Thae said.

In return, the North may agree to dismantle its Yongbyon nuclear material production facility and to destroy intercontinental ballistic missiles, he said.

The U.S. administration has insisted that it will maintain punishing economic sanctions until the final, fully verified denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is achieved.

But it also is under tremendous pressure to achieve concrete results in Vietnam after widespread criticism that the first U.S.-North Korean summit in Singapore ended with only vague promises.

Thae warned that the second meeting between the two men in less than a year will be a failure if Trump does not persuade Kim to agree to complete denuclearization and return to key treaties that were abandoned when previous talks collapsed more than a decade ago.

"If the U.S. is really trying to

achieve the complete denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula then it needs to first require the North Korean leader to get rid of nuclear weapons and to promise to return to the nonproliferation treaty and the International Atomic Energy Agency," Thae said.

He said a promise to dismantle the North's nuclear material production facility at Yongbyon would be a small prize, comparing it to "flitting sanctions without any concrete measures from North Korea."

The Soviet-era plant was also at the center of past failed negotiations. Thae said the complex now has more than 390 facilities that would have to be inspected and verified, which means the process would almost certainly not be finished before the end of Trump's first term.

He also said any pledge to dismantle ICBMs would be limited because the international community doesn't have a complete tally of the weapons that could target the U.S. mainland.

A series of missile and nuclear tests, including the test-firing of ICBMs toward Japan, in 2017 raised fears that the divided peninsula was on the brink of a nuclear war.

Trump has frequently touted the suspension of those tests as a measure of success since his administration began new talks with North Koreans last year.

But Thae said the moratorium was possible because the North Koreans already had made strong progress.

He also said that Yongbyon and the main nuclear testing facility at Kangrye-ri were on the table because they had already served their purpose.

"They've already come very close to their end of life," he said.

Thae was a senior diplomat at North Korea's embassy in London when he defected to South Korea in 2016. Since then, he has been very vocal in his criticism of the regime. But he reversed his call for Jo Song Gil, an old colleague who went missing from North Korea's embassy in Italy in November, to defect to South Korea.

Thae said Tuesday that he had confirmed via a contact in North Korea that Jo's daughter had been repatriated and was in the government's custody. Italian media have reported that Jo has sought asylum in the United States. "I was lucky enough to bring all my family out safely to South Korea, but now that I found out for a fact that his daughter is in North Korea, then I cannot demand or plead with Cho to come to South Korea," he said.

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Hau Dinh/AP

War veteran and cemetery caretaker Duong Van Dau walks in between a row of headstones at a memorial for North Korean fallen pilots in Bac Giang province, Vietnam, on Saturday.

Memorial speaks to N. Korea's ties to summit host Vietnam

By HAU DINH
AND GRANT PECK
Associated Press

BAC GIANG, Vietnam — In a rice field in northern Vietnam, 14 headstones are an enduring symbol of the wartime friendship of Vietnam and North Korea. They mark the original burial ground of North Korean pilots who died while secretly fighting alongside Vietnamese comrades against U.S. Air Force and Navy planes during the Vietnam War.

The role of North Korea is a footnote in the sweeping history of that conflict, one that speaks mostly of the fraternal relations of two nations that separately fought bruising armed conflicts against the United States in the context of the Cold War. Decades later, the communist nations' friendship is apparent as Vietnam gets ready to host the second summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un next week.

"When they died, Vietnamese people treated them the same as Vietnamese martyrs who sacrificed for the country," Duong Van Dau, the caretaker of the memorial, said last week. On the high ground where the fallen pilots were interred, their tombs all face northeast, toward their homeland.

South Korea's role in the war is much better known. From 1964 to 1973, Seoul deployed more than 300,000 military personnel to help the U.S. effort in South Vietnam against the communists.

By contrast, the North Korean air force contingent deployed near Hanoi, the caretaker of the memorial, said last week. On the high ground where the fallen pilots were interred, their tombs all face northeast, toward their homeland.

In September 1966, according

to Vietnamese historical documents obtained and translated by CIA analyst-turned-scholar Merle Pribbenow, Hanoi accepted an offer by Pyongyang to send three companies of pilots who would form a regiment equipped with 30 aircraft in total. They were to wear North Vietnamese uniforms and Vietnam would provide the aircraft, facilities and equipment.

It was timely assistance. Vietnam's fleet of aging Russian-made Mig-17 fighters was taking heavy losses defending against the U.S. bombing campaign against North Vietnam, Operation Rolling Thunder. China and Russia provided material assistance, but the number of trained Vietnamese pilots was shrinking by attrition.

The first North Korean contingent, also destined to fly Mig-17s, were sent before the end of 1966 to keep air base in Bac Giang province, 40 miles northeast of Hanoi, to aid in training and to carry out combat missions.

"The agreement was signed by the two governments, but we didn't know anything about it. I did know that North Korea wanted to send pilots to Vietnam so that they could practice and gain experience with the aim of building its air force," Vu Ngoc Dinh, one of the Vietnamese pilots who served alongside the Koreans, recalled in an interview with Istvan Tópeczer, a Hungarian air force officer-turned-historian.

"The pilots were their best ones whose parents or relatives were working for the Politburo of the North Korean Central Party Committee," Dinh is quoted saying in Tópeczer's book "MIG Aces of the Vietnam War."

"They sent their pilots and commanders to Vietnam and we provided the hardware they required during their service," Dinh said. "They kept everything

secret, so we didn't know their loss ratio, but the North Korean pilots claimed 26 American aircraft destroyed."

"Although they fought very bravely in the aerial battles, they were generally too slow and too mechanical in their reactions when engaged, which is why so many of them were shot down by the Americans," Dinh said. "They never followed flight instructions and regulations either."

Dau, the cemetery caretaker, is also a war veteran. He joined the army and marched south in 1966 to fight for the communist side in South Vietnam. He was discharged three years later after getting shot in the knee in fighting just outside Saigon, now called Ho Chi Minh City.

"For the North Korean pilots who fought to protect our country and died for our country, I salute them. Being a soldier myself, I have great compassion for them. I see them as my comrades, regardless of the nationality," Dau said.

In 2002, the remains of the pilots were repatriated from Vietnam to North Korea in a ceremony held by the military of both countries. But the headstones remain, lined up in two rows behind a memorial marker with an inscription in Vietnamese: "Here used to lie 14 North Korean comrades."

Since the repatriation, the number of visitors to the site has declined. But Dau said he would continue to care for the gated memorial to the fallen pilots.

Only in 2000-01 was the participation of the North Korean pilots officially acknowledged by Hanoi and Pyongyang. Since then, there has been a trickle of additional details about North Korea's involvement in the Vietnam War, teased out mostly from Vietnamese memoirs and state press accounts and Eastern European diplomatic archives.

MILITARY

USAF to request 8 new F-15 fighter bombers

By TONY CAPACCIO

Bloomberg

The U.S. Air Force's next budget will request funds for eight new F-15 fighter bombers from Boeing Co., beefing up its inventory with an upgraded version of a plane it last bought in 2001 even as it pursues the more advanced F-35 from rival Lockheed Martin Corp.

The F-15s will be proposed in the fiscal 2020 budget, expected around March 11, as the first of a potential 80-plane purchase over the next five years, said people familiar with the Air Force's plan.

Even though the request has White House support, it's likely to raise questions from skeptical lawmakers about why the Air Force, which has spent years saying it needs the "fifth-generation" F-35, now wants more F-15s as well.

Boeing has kept its F-15 production line in St. Louis going with continued sales to allies including Israel, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The new F-15X for the U.S. would be a variation on planes sold to Qatar but would be able to carry heavier loads of air-to-ground and air-to-air weapons than current F-15s or the F-35s.

With its internal weapons carriage, the F-35 probably can't accommodate planned heavier

weapons such as the hypersonic missiles that are now under development. On the other hand, the F-15X would lack the technological advances of the F-35, including its stealth profile to evade the most advanced Russian and Chinese air defense systems, as well as its sophisticated sensors and data-sharing capabilities.

The Air Force will propose buying the F-15X without reducing the fleet of 1,763 F-35s that it has long planned, the people said. The service would purchase 48 of the 84 F-35s that were called for last year in the Pentagon's plan for 2020, with the remainder going to the Navy and Marines, according to program documents.

Still, Lockheed has been quietly reminding lawmakers and congressional staff of its arguments for the F-35 as the better choice, including through a "fact sheet" distributed in December. That was followed by an attack on the F-15X by five senators who wrote President Donald Trump last week calling the Boeing plane "outdated."

"The U.S. Air Force fighter budget is unlikely to grow by much, so the fear is that replacing the F-15 fleet, rather than upgrading the old F-15s, would take cash away from F-35 procurement," Richard Aboulafia, an aerospace analyst with the Teal Group of



An F-15 Eagle is shown in flight. The Air Force is seeking funds for eight new F-15s in addition to more advanced F-35s.

“The U.S. Air Force fighter budget is unlikely to grow by much, so the fear is that replacing the F-15 fleet ... would take cash away from F-35 procurement.”

Richard Aboulafia

Teal Group aerospace analyst

Fairfax, Va., said in an email.

Boeing said in a statement that it's "ready to provide a highly survivable advanced variant of F-15 to the Air Force at an affordable cost."

A spokesman for the Air Force declined to comment on the proposal until the president's proposed budget is released.

The planned F-15X purchase

originated from an assessment of the Air Force's needs by career analysts in the Pentagon's independent cost assessment office. It's won favor from White House budget officials who agreed it would fill a niche for an aircraft capable of carrying a heavy load of ordnance, according to one of the people.

Chicago-based Boeing has of-

fered the aircraft, including engines, for about \$80 million per plane under a fixed-price contract, with the first deliveries to come in 2022. By comparison, the F-35 from Bethesda, Md.-based Lockheed is estimated to cost \$89 million each in the latest contract, with a goal of \$80 million by 2020.

Lockheed's December "fact sheet" said the F-15X would cost \$90 million each and have less range, acceleration and time to remain over a target than the F-35.

Lockheed spokesman William Phelps said the document was prepared for a Dec. 13 congressional briefing and was consistent with ones the company has produced for years comparing the F-35 with older fighters.

Marilyn Hewson, Lockheed's chief executive officer, told analysts in January that she's hearing "directly from leadership in the Pentagon" that the F-35 is "well-supported across the board" so it won't be affected by a potential F-15 purchase.

Still, two of Lockheed's strongest congressional supporters, Republican Sen. John Cornyn and Ted Cruz, of Texas, drew up the letter to Trump warning against underfunding the F-35, which is built in their state, in order to buy the F-15X.



Via Twitter

The USS Santa Fe, foreground, takes part in exercises off the western Australia coast with four Australian subs.

USS Santa Fe trains with 4 Australian subs

Stars and Stripes

The USS Santa Fe sailed in formation with four Royal Australian Navy submarines during Exercise Ocean Explorer off Australia's western coast, the Australian Fleet commander said in a tweet Tuesday.

Rear Adm. Jonathan Mead wrote it was

"great to have our American partner and friend [down under]" during the exercise.

The Santa Fe, home-ported at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii, is a fast-attack submarine with 12 vertical launch tubes for Tomahawk cruise missiles, according to the Navy.

This is the third year for Ocean Explorer,

in which the British and New Zealand navies also participate.

The three-week exercise began Sunday, according to the Royal Australian Navy. Participants are practicing maritime security, humanitarian and disaster relief and warfighting.

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Debt: Most of the letters examined were missing key information

FROM FRONT PAGE

The GAO didn't review the California National Guard incident but noted the Pentagon's acknowledgement that trying to collect overpayments has placed an undue burden on servicemembers and their families, including financial hardship, garnishment of wages and damage to credit scores.

For its audit, GAO examined 49 debt notification letters sent by the department's various collection offices to military personnel between January 2016 and May 2018. It found that 45 of the letters were missing key information required by the DOD's own debt collection regulations.

More than 40 letters did not include a statement that repayments would be promptly refunded if later waived or found not to be owed; others did not inform the servicemember of the right to inspect and copy DOD records related to the debt or include a statement regarding the right to request a debt remission. Some letters did not advise servicemembers that pay would be deducted if repayment was not received within 30 days, according to the report.

The GAO recommended several revisions to the Pentagon's debt collection process, such as updating debt notification letter templates to include all required information and ensuring DOD regulations and websites clearly state whether and when collection should be suspended during the review process for servicemembers who dispute their debt.

The Pentagon agreed with all recommendations.

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PACIFIC

Retired Japanese general says China plans annexations

35-year veteran of JASDF believes Taiwan will be invaded by 2025, Okinawa by 2045

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A former Japanese military officer recently made waves by saying he believes China plans to invade and annex Taiwan by 2025 and Okinawa by 2045.

The comments by retired Lt. Gen. Kunio Orita, a 35-year veteran of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force and a former commander of the 301st Tactical Fighter Squadron and 6th Air Wing, appeared last month in the English-language Taiwan News.

Orita, who retired in 2009 and is now a guest professor at Toyo Gakuen University in Tokyo, recently told Stars and Stripes he expects Beijing will attempt to expand its sphere of influence by first taking control of Taiwan and then militarizing a key disputed islet in the South China Sea.

Once that's accomplished, he said, China will set its sights on Japan's southern island prefecture, which hosts about half of the approximately 54,000 U.S. troops serving in Japan.

Beijing plans to force the United States out of Okinawa by fostering negative media coverage and supporting the anti-U.S. military protest movement on the island, the former general said.

"If China can push out the U.S. military from the region, it is possible that they can conquer the South China Sea and they will gain the power to stop any trade between Japan and other countries," he said in a phone interview with Stars and Stripes on Jan. 28.

'Tremendous pressure'

The key to making that happen is building a naval port at Scarborough Shoal, an islet about 200 miles west of Manila in the South China Sea, Orita said. Beijing took control of Scarborough's resource-rich lagoon from the Philippines in 2012.

"By building up their forces there, it will add tremendous pressure on surrounding countries," he said, adding that China backed off plans to militarize Scarborough as it's done on other South China Sea islets after U.S. overflights of A-10 Thunderbolt IIs in April 2016.

A pair of B-52 bombers flew past the shoal in June, drawing condemnation from Beijing, according to The Associated Press. However, Orita thinks Taiwan

will be annexed first.

That will begin with China declaring a no-fly zone around the island nation, he said, adding that any aircraft that tries to come to Taiwan's aid will be shot down.

Orita then expects Beijing to provoke and attack Taiwanese navy and air force assets, both on land and in the Taiwan Strait, which separates it from China. Next, he expects them to blockade the island until Taiwan's government agrees to come to the negotiating table, where a pro-Beijing regime will be installed.

"After taking over Taiwan, China will gain more influence over Indo-Pacific shipping lanes, then China can start to add nuclear pressure on the countries in the Pacific," he said.

Orita said China will then take the nearby Senkaku Islands, a disputed chain northeast of Taiwan and northwest of Japan's Miyako island in the East China Sea also claimed by Japan and Taiwan, and encourage Okinawans to declare their independence from Japan.

The Chinese have long been antagonistic regarding the Senkakus.

In 2016, China sailed an aircraft carrier between Miyako and Okinawa's main island. There have been frequent overflights of Chinese military aircraft in the same space since then, Japanese Defense Ministry officials told Stars and Stripes last year.

'Dumping money'

"China keeps pushing up the territorial line every year by breaking into Miyako-Okinawa," Orita said.

The communist superpower has also been "dumping money to influence Okinawa to turn its back on its country," he said, in a reference to the island's fervent anti-U.S. military movement. Orita said he's learned through intelligence sources that includes funneling money to Okinawan media outlets for anti-U.S. military coverage. However, he could not provide proof of this assertion.

"China wants Okinawa to be an independent country," he said. "An independent country does not need U.S. forces on the island."

The retired general's opinions are not universally accepted among Japanese academics.

Aomori University professor Hideki Hirano told Stars and Stripes the comments were outlandish and questioned whether Orita had even made them.



Via Facebook

Retired Japan Air Self-Defense Force Lt. Gen. Kunio Orita, foreground, walks with a member of the U.S. military in Qatar. Orita has predicted China plans to invade and annex Taiwan and Okinawa.

Scholar, defense expert and former Japan Ground Self-Defense Force Lt. Gen. Toshiyuki Shikata said he agrees with Orita's principles but not his timeline.

"I don't think Taiwan will be taken by military force by 2025," he said. "China may use economic pressure as well as influencing the Taiwanese government and its people within instead."

Shikata said he believes China would take Scarborough Shoal first and then move to take Taiwan, not the other way around.

"I believe China will expand its influence over Taiwan and Scarborough Shoal at the same time, as both are necessary for China to move toward the Senkakus," he said.

China's influence

However, if the Chinese do take Taiwan in the coming years, Shikata agreed that attempts to capture Okinawa are possible by 2045.

China has been influencing Okinawa to become anti-U.S. military and anti-Tokyo," he said. "China has been using the (protest) movement in Okinawa very well."

Okinawan protest leaders have scoffed at assertions that their movement, which aims to reduce the island's U.S. military presence, has been co-opted by Beijing.

"If the Senkakus get taken over, the U.S. won't be able to stop China," Shikata said.

Neither Japan's Defense Ministry nor Okinawan prefectural officials would comment on the former general's statements.

A spokesman from the Office of the Secretary of Defense also would not comment specifically on Orita's statements but said the Defense Department will



Courtesy of Pixabay

Orita says Taiwan, shown here, is being targeted for invasion by China as early as 2025. A spokesman for the U.S. secretary of defense said the U.S. has a vital interest in keeping Taiwan free, prosperous and democratic.

"continue to pursue a constructive, results-oriented relationship with China." It also will not accept policies or actions "that threaten to undermine the international rules-based order."

"We will cooperate where our interests align and compete, vigorously, where our interests diverge," spokesman Marine Lt. Col. Christopher Logan wrote in an email to Stars and Stripes on Jan. 29.

"We have a vital interest in upholding the current rules-based international order, which features a free, prosperous and democratic Taiwan. The objective of our defense engagement with Taiwan is to ensure that Taiwan remains secure, confident, free from coercion and able to engage in a peaceful, productive dialogue to resolve differences in a manner acceptable to people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait."

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MILITARY

America first or America alone?

On world stage, acting Pentagon chief must answer for president

By MISSY RYAN
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — In a six-day trip that took him to four cities on two continents, acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan came face to face with one consistent reality last week:

ANALYSIS the discord generated by President Donald Trump and his “America First” agenda.

For the first time since becoming Pentagon chief last month, Shanahan was asked to answer for the uncertainties produced by the president’s often unpopular foreign policy.

The former Boeing executive, who took over in January after the abrupt resignation of his predecessor, Jim Mattis, deferred to the president’s decisions and suggested, in high-level talks, steps that U.S. allies can take to adjust.

At the conclusion of the trip, Shanahan told reporters that he had anticipated a “more standoffish” reception.

“The pushback was we need these issues addressed, these questions answered,” he said. “There were no promises or guarantees, but there was support.”

As Shanahan publicly auditions to keep the military’s top job, the gaps that critics have identified in his resume could win him favor with his commander in chief: slim foreign policy experience and limited investment in the counterterrorism was that have monopolized the military’s focus for two decades.

“Shanahan comes from the business executive world, and he’s considerably freer about one of the guardrails of the Washington foreign policy establishment,” said Elbridge Colby, a former Pentagon official who worked closely with Shanahan. “He’s not afraid to leave some things in the past.”

Current and former officials described a more dispassionate approach to the counterinsurgency campaigns that have emerged as a friction point between Trump and his generals.

Private-sector view

Since becoming the Pentagon’s No. 2 in 2017, Shanahan has brought a private sector view to his priorities of modernizing the military and preparing for possible conflict with China. Like the president, he has little previous experience with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to speak candidly, said Shanahan, 56, takes a more orientalist view. Like the president, he has little previous experience with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

produce lasting security despite almost two decades and billions of dollars of effort.

Colby said there was “a lot of water under the bridge” for senior military leaders, in contrast, when it comes to those wars. “If you’re going to lead people into the fight in Iraq or Afghanistan, you have to believe in it,” he said. “They’ve been to Arlington (National Cemetery) too many times to fake it.”

Shanahan takes over at the Pentagon at a moment of intensified congressional oversight and controversy over the president’s moves to involve the military in his plans for the U.S.-Mexico border.

When Mattis quit in December over differences with Trump, Shanahan was a little-known quantity outside the Pentagon. Mattis, a retired Marine general, cut a larger-than-life figure in Washington, lauded by members of both parties for seeking to steer Trump toward traditional foreign policy positions.

Shanahan was more focused on internal Pentagon matters. While he sometimes attended top-level White House meetings on Mattis’ behalf, his chief responsibilities were less visible, including a Pentagon audit and a proposal to create a new space force.

West Coast style

Shanahan, known during his decadeslong Boeing career as a driven manager who helped turn around the company’s troubled Dreamliner program, brought an unceremonious, West Coast style to the Pentagon, former colleagues said. For weekend work sessions, he would show up in workout gear and jeans and occasionally ribbed other officials who came in button-downs and khakis.

While how much progress Shanahan made in reforming the department’s byzantine practices remains a matter of debate, he seemed to connect with Trump, another businessman and Washington outsider.

“The challenge for him will be the need to move from deputy, focused on internal matters, running the Pentagon, budgetary matters, business processes and so on, to a highly visible, foreign policy-inflected role in a highly unusual administration,” said Richard Fontaine, president of the Center for a New American Security and a former adviser to the late Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz.

As acting secretary, Shanahan is responsible for ushering core defense alliances through a period of unprecedented tension over Trump’s decisions on Syria, Afghanistan and arms control and his adversarial approach to trade, Iran and multilateral organizations.



FRANCISCO SEC/AP

Acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan, right, talks to British Defense Minister Gavin Williamson on Thursday at a defense ministers meeting at NATO headquarters in Brussels.



TOBIAS HASE, DPA/AP

German Minister of Defense Ursula von der Leyen, center, smiles as Shanahan, left, shakes hands with Turkish Minister of Defense Hulusi Akar during the International Security Conference in Munich on Friday.

In Afghanistan last week, Shanahan met with President Ashraf Ghani, who has voiced concern that the Trump administration could give too much away in nascent peace talks. Afghan leaders were unnerved late last year when military officials were instructed to begin drawing up plans for a major troop reduction at a time when Taliban militants continued to pose a major challenge.

In Iraq, he held talks with Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi in the wake of a political uproar caused by Trump’s suggestion that the United States could leave troops in the country to “watch Iran.” That statement energized Iraqi lawmakers who support legislation that could scuttle plans for a continued U.S. counterterrorism mission there.

Trump pushback

The friction was most evident in Europe, where Shanahan met with NATO ministers in Brussels and attended a global security conference in Munich. There, German

Chancellor Angela Merkel received a standing ovation when she pushed back against Trump administration decisions Europeans see as unilateral and unjustified. Many European countries have complained that the decisions to remove troops from Syria and possibly Afghanistan were made without consulting allies fighting there too and could allow militants to regroup.

Analysts said NATO leaders were anxious to take stock of the person replacing Mattis, who won European support as he appeared to exert unparalleled influence over Trump, securing a troop increase for Afghanistan and backing for traditional alliances.

Ivo Daalder, president of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and a former U.S. ambassador to NATO, said those leaders will evaluate Shanahan through the lens of Mattis’ ultimate failure to convince Trump of the merits of more traditional foreign policy views.

During Mattis’ tenure, Trump

pushed through a series of moves opposed by many Pentagon officials, including a costly military parade and suspension of military exercises with South Korea.

“It was clear that Trump was his own boss by 2018,” Daalder said. In that light, he said, “frankly, there isn’t anything [Shanahan] can do or say to reassure allies in the way that Mattis could. That’s his unenviable position.”

A solid performance

Continued uncertainty about Shanahan’s own future could also diminish his effectiveness with already skeptical allies. Trump has said he prefers having Cabinet members who have not been confirmed, saying that keeping subordinates in an acting capacity increases his flexibility and allows him to “go fast.”

While Trump has publicly praised Shanahan, it remains unclear where Shanahan’s views may differ from the president’s and how much he will challenge him when they do.

Shanahan’s advisers judged his inaugural trip a solid performance. It will now be up to Trump whether he nominates Shanahan, leaves him in the job in an acting status or chooses someone else.

As he sought to make a favorable first impression, and with a president with often inscrutable personnel preferences, some of the biggest buzz of Shanahan’s tour was related to his sartorial choice. Stepping out of a helicopter when he touched down at a military base in Kabul, Shanahan’s angular dark jacket and black turban contrasted with the Pentagon’s unofficial civilian uniform of oxford shirt and blue blazer.

The acting secretary made light of the moment days later: “Did you like my outfit?” Shanahan asked British Defense Secretary Gavin Williamson as the two men shook hands at NATO headquarters.

“I did, I did,” Williamson replied. The consensus, he said: “You look like Special Forces.”

WAR ON TERRORISM

Caliphate is now just crises in close quarters

By LOUISA LOVELUCK

The Washington Post

AL-HOL, Syria — At the end, Islamic State is little more than a hamlet of tents, pitched in panic between U.S. bombing raids.

Inside, there has been chaos, witnesses say. Families have fled. Militants are hoarding food. Some fighters have turned their guns on each other.

As U.S.-backed forces surround the last square mile of ISIS territory, preparing for a final assault on the eastern Syrian village of Baghouz, people who have escaped described a desperate scramble for survival in the dying days of the statelet.

In more than a dozen interviews at screening points outside the village and at the al-Hol displacement camp, those who fled recounted the end of the self-proclaimed caliphate in graphic, often harrowing detail. Wives and children of the ISIS fighters looked confused and exhausted. Yazidi women and their families, who had been enslaved by the militants, were in shock.

One said she had walked "out of hell."

They described how they had retreated in recent weeks from city to town and then into rural villages as the bombs kept falling and their caliphate shrank. By the time they reached the village of al-Hol, near the Shafer Baghouz close to the Iraqi border, several women said they had given up unpacking their suitcases.

"We were just moving again and again," said a woman from the northern city of Raqqa, who gave her name as Om Mohamed.

Basic supplies in ISIS territory have dried up. Prices have soared, and civilians have subsisted on what food they have left, adding weeds as bulk to other ingredients when available and boiling the weeds by themselves when that was all that was left.

Airstrikes have made the earth shake, with the U.S. military reporting 179 airstrikes in Syria targeting the militants in the two weeks ending Feb. 9. Gunshots cracked down to dusk, residents said.

"The commanders were getting more withdrawn and telling us to stay where we were and keep shooting," said Sadah, a 15-year-old Yazidi boy kidnapped by ISIS in 2014 and later pressed into staffing an outpost to defend Baghouz. "Some of them were panicking. You could hear them saying that it was over. But other men were shouting across him; they were saying, 'This is forever, forever.'"

At its height, ISIS' self-declared caliphate covered an area the size of Britain, straddling Syria and Iraq, and its propaganda sold a dream of Islamic paradise. Its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, declared his state from the pulpit of a mosque in the Iraqi city of Mosul, while his army of militants rampaged on, slaughtering and enslaving thousands of members of the Yazidi religious minority in what the United Nations has described as a genocide.

Courtyard: SDF aim appears to be waiting out militants

FROM FRONT PAGE

An Associated Press team got a rare glimpse of the ISIS-held settlement, standing on a rooftop about a half-mile away during a media tour to the front lines organized by the Syrian Democratic Forces. The roof looked out over a flat, green landscape with scattered palm trees to an earthen berm and a line of pickup trucks put up by the militants at the edge of the camp.

At one point, gunfire cracked in the distance. An SDF commander on the roof with a number of fighters said it isn't always so quiet. Only days earlier the militants surprised the soldiers with an attempted night raid. The SDF can't assault the site or call in airstrikes because of the civilians, he said, adding that his fighters have seen the militants moving civilians around at gunpoint as protection.

They try a psychological war. But that is it! The war is over, and we won," said the commander, who spoke on condition he be identified only by his nom de guerre, Baran, in line with SDF rules.

The tense standoff by the village of Baghouz is the endgame for the militant group that since 2014 controlled a vast stretch of territory across Syria and Iraq — at one point nearly from Aleppo to Baghdad — and ruled for years, aspiring to create an enduring and expanding jihadi state. The 300 militants in the pocket may include high-level figures and are believed to hold hostages.

Activists said a truce in place has been extended for five days as of Sunday. A person familiar with ongoing deliberations said the group has asked for an exit through a corridor to the rebel-held northwestern province of Idlib and demand to be allowed to leave along with the civilians.

Inside the caliphate, jihadists ran hospitals and cleaned the streets. There were floggings and crucifixions in its public squares.

By last week, there was only one dusty path out of ISIS, and hundreds of fighters and civilians had trudged along it, toward the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces backed by the U.S. military, and then were sent hundreds of miles to refugee camps or prisons.

President Donald Trump and SDF officers have said a victory is imminent over ISIS and the several hundred fighters still believed to be in Baghouz.

The militant group's most die-hard fighters have seen escape as a betrayal. But as the final battle loomed, others chose survival, laying down their guns and skulking out among fleeing civilians, or using middlemen to negotiate surrender.



FELIPE DANA/AP

A U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces fighter walks near the last land still held by Islamic State in Baghouz, Syria, on Monday.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak about the talks, which he described as taking place indirectly.

Dozens of trucks arrived Tuesday at the outskirts of the besieged enclave, signaling renewed efforts to evacuate hundreds of civilians trapped in the militants' last patch of territory along the Euphrates River.

A spokesman for the U.S.-backed Syrian militia that is spearheading the fight against ISIS said a military operation aimed at ousting the extremists from the enclave will begin if they don't surrender.

Such an operation would take place after separating or evacuating civilians from the militants, estimated to be about 300 combatants, said Mustafa Bali, the spokesman for the Syrian Democratic Forces.

"We are working on either separating the civilians or evacuating them and raiding the

place," Bali told The Associated Press.

AP journalists saw dozens of trucks moving to the tip of a humanitarian corridor used in past weeks. That corridor had been deserted for the last week after thousands fled through it.

About 40 civilians, including a French woman, left the enclave Tuesday morning, apparently after paying smugglers, said a member of the Free Burma Rangers, a volunteer medical group.

By sundown, there was no sign of any civilians coming out. On the other side of the ISIS-held pocket, an airstrike was launched by the U.S.-led coalition.

An SDF commander, Zana Amedi, said his group made a final warning to remaining militants to surrender. In a Twitter post, he said most of them are seriously wounded or sick.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based

war monitor, said about 50 trucks belonging to the coalition arrived at the outskirts of the area.

Adnan Afrin, a commander with the SDF, said a number of civilians and some fighters have turned themselves in, and that the trucks went to the corridor to get them. He reported some clashes on the other side of the enclave between ISIS militants who don't want to surrender and SDF fighters.

A U.N. official said she is concerned about the condition of the some 200 families trapped in the enclave.

In a statement issued in Geneva, U.N. human rights chief Michelle Bachete said the extremists are actively preventing civilians, including women and children, from leaving the area.

The International Rescue Committee said Monday that more than 60 people have died in recent weeks after making their way out of the ISIS-controlled area, most of them from exhaustion and malnutrition. They either died along the way or soon after arriving at a massive camp in northern Syria that is hosting those fleeing in eastern Deir el-Zour province.

In southern Syria, near the border with Jordan, the Syrian government opened two humanitarian corridors Tuesday with the help of Russian troops for people who want to move from one camp to other parts of the country, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

Jordan closed the border because of security concerns. The Syrian government and its ally, Russia, have blamed U.S. troops stationed nearby for failing to provide security for aid shipments — allegations denied by the Americans.

compared with other inhabitants who had left Baghouz.

As ISIS' domain dwindled to Baghouz, the remaining houses and apartments in the village filled up with dozens to a room or were taken over by fighters as defensive positions. When ISIS decided that the apartments were full, it was time for tents.

Ibtissam Taha, 16 and from the Iraqi city of Fallujah, said she and her brothers had raised theirs under cover of darkness, after the militants directed families to do so. Taha said her family spent four nights in the tents with bombs striking close by.

"They were just falling, falling. It was relentless," she said.

As the end approached, refugees from Baghouz and SDF fighters said, the caliphate's smugglers were making vast sums. Rumors swirled that several thousand dollars would get a man to Iraq or

into Syrian government territory. Families paid hundreds per person to get safe passage from the snipers and out along the path to surrender.

Those without the funds waited, instead, for a pause in bombing. "And then, finally," said Lina Mohamed Mahmoud, 17, from ISIS' former capital of Raqqa, Syria. The journey lasted hours into the night, but they walked and walked, seeing SDF's reception point as the sun rose.

As she was interviewed in the al-Hol displacement camp, three days after leaving the tatters of ISIS' caliphate, the teenager tended to her four children, all coughing or crying, and under age 5.

"I don't know what to do now," she said. "They told us the caliphate was ending as a territory, but they told us as well that it would live on in a way. Now, we're all just waiting."

NATION

16 states sue over Trump wall funding tactics

By AMY GOLDSTEIN
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — A coalition of 16 states filed a federal lawsuit Monday to block President Donald Trump's plan to build a border wall without permission from Congress, arguing that the president's decision to declare a national emergency is unconstitutional.

The lawsuit, brought by states with Democratic governors — except for one, Maryland — seeks a preliminary injunction that would prevent the president from acting on his emergency declaration while the case plays out in the courts.

The complaint was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, a San Francisco-based court whose judges have ruled against an array of other Trump administration policies, including on immigration and the environment.

Accusing the president of "an unconstitutional and unlawful scheme," the suit says the states are trying "to protect their residents, natural resources, and economic interests from President Donald J. Trump's flagrant disregard of fundamental separation of powers principles engrafted in the United States Constitution."

The complaint, filed by the attorneys general of nearly a third of the states and representing tens of millions of Americans, immediately became the heavyweight among a rapid outpouring of op-

position to the president's emergency declaration. In the White House Rose Garden on Friday, Trump announced that he was instituting a national emergency at the U.S.-Mexico border because Congress did not provide enough money for a wall that has stood as one of the most enduring promises from his 2016 campaign.

The Justice Department declined to comment on the lawsuit Monday night.

Several nonprofit organizations already have gone to court or announced plans to sue.

Protesters took to the streets in several cities Monday. Across from the White House, demonstrators held neon-colored letters that spelled "Power grab."

"You wouldn't expect to celebrate Presidents' Day this way, but we're what you got to do," California's Democratic attorney general, Xavier Becerra, leader of the states coalition, said Monday. "In this case, we are having to commemorate... by protesting, whether marching in the street or marching into court."

Through the president's declared emergency, White House officials plan to use \$8 billion to build sections of a barrier that Trump says will obstruct or deter migrants from crossing into the country. That sum is about \$6.6 billion more than Congress allotted for the purpose in its latest spending plan. To fill in the gap, the White House intends, among other things, to divert \$3.6 billion from military construction



Rich Pedroncelli/AP

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra, right, filed a lawsuit on behalf of 16 states Monday against President Donald Trump's emergency declaration to fund a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border.

accounts and \$2.5 billion from Department of Defense efforts to fight illicit drugs.

In the 56-page complaint, Becerra and his counterparts argue that diverting money that Congress has designated for other purposes violates the separation of powers defined in the Constitution. The complaint says that once Congress passes laws and a president signs them, the Constitution requires that the president "take care that the laws be faithfully executed."

Another clause of the Constitution, the lawsuit notes, prevents money from being paid from the U.S. Treasury unless Congress has appropriated it.

The lawsuit also says that the "federal government's own data prove there is no national emergency at the southern border that warrants construction of a wall. Customs and Border Protection data show that unlawful entries are near 45-year lows."

And it enumerates ways that residents of the participating states — and the states them-

selves — could be harmed by the diversion of money. They include loss of funding to military bases, weakened drug-fighting efforts and damage to states' economies.

In addition to California, the states participating in the suit are Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon and Virginia. With the exception of Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan, a Republican, the governors of the states are Democrats.

The suit names as defendants the president; the departments of Defense, Treasury, Interior and Homeland Security; and senior officials of those departments.

In filing the case in the San Francisco-based Northern District, the attorneys general chose a jurisdiction that has repeatedly been at odds with the president. According to a count by The Washington Post, the court's judges have ruled against Trump administration in at least nine important cases.

Judges there have ruled against efforts by the Commerce Department to add a citizenship question to the 2020 Census, numerous rollbacks of environmental regulations, efforts to curtail asylum for migrants and the Department of Homeland Security's revocation of special "temporary protected status" for hundreds of thousands of immigrants legally living in the U.S.

Cases appealed from that court go to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit, which Trump has derided as "a complete and total disaster" and "a thorn in our side."

Trump has said that his declaration is allowed under the 1976 National Emergencies Act and that it has been used dozens of times. Outside analyses, including by the Brennan Center for Justice, have shown that virtually all such emergencies involved sanctions against foreign governments and groups for reasons such as human rights violations rather than to spend money Congress intended for other purposes.

Adult dies in US custody after 'illegal re-entry' apprehension

By ISAAC STANLEY-BECKER
The Washington Post

A 45-year-old Mexican national detained by U.S. Customs and Border Protection died Monday at a medical facility in McAllen, Texas, after twice seeking medical attention, the agency reported.

The fatality followed the deaths in December of two migrant children in government custody, which prompted a vow from CBP to conduct health checks on all children in its "care and custody," as the agency's commissioner, Kevin McAleenan, said at the time. The fate of those two children, both from Guatemala, renewed concerns about the "zero tolerance" immigration policy pursued by President Donald Trump.

Another death is likely to raise questions about the border control organization at the fore-

front of that policy, especially as the president crusades for a wall at the southern border. Trump's critics point to a humanitarian crisis fomented by his own hardline approach rather than a crisis of illegal entries that he falsely claims is overwhelming the southwestern United States.

According to a statement Monday from the agency, the unnamed adult was apprehended on Feb. 2 for "illegal re-entry," which means the individual had tried to enter the country at least once before. The migrant came into contact with authorities near a port of entry in Roma, Texas, about 50 miles northwest of McAllen.

The detainee requested medical attention and was transported to a hospital in Mission, Texas, adjacent to McAllen. The same day, the individual was cleared to travel and sent back to a CBP station in Rio Grande City, close to Roma.

On Feb. 3, the detainee again requested medical attention, and, according to CBP, was transported to the McAllen Medical Center "shortly thereafter." The Mexican national was diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver and congestive heart failure and remained at the 441-bed hospital from Feb. 3 until dying just before 9 a.m. Monday.

The official cause of death was unknown. The border control agency said its Office of Professional Responsibility was conducting a review. It had also notified the Department of Homeland Security's inspector general, responsible for oversight of the department, as well as Congress about the Mexican government.

"This loss of life is tragic," Andrew Meehan, a CBP spokesman, said in the agency statement. "Our condolences go out to the family and loved ones. CBP remains committed to ensuring the safe and humane treatment

of those within the care of our custody."

As of last month, when NBC News published a review of audits and other government reports, at least 22 immigrants had died in American detention centers over the previous two years.

In the same period, DHS' Office of Inspector General issued numerous warnings about improper care at detention centers maintained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which receives migrants once they are processed at border facilities. A report released in December 2017 identified "problems that undermine the protection of detainees' rights, their humane treatment, and the provision of a safe and healthy environment."

The December deaths of Jakelin Caal, 7, and Felipe Gomez Alonzo, 8, came amid record-breaking numbers of families seeking entry to the United States.

Holding cells filled up as Trump promised an end to a policy he calls "catch and release."

Meanwhile, facilities designed for single men proved inadequate for a more diverse population of migrants and asylum-seekers, illustrated by a rash of illnesses at the end of last year.

Homeland Security Secretary Kirsten Nielsen said the immigration system had reached a "breaking point," advising those planning border crossings to desist. But advocates for immigrants warn that new barriers will only shift journeys to more remote and dangerous locations.

The budget compromise reached by lawmakers last week includes \$415 million for humanitarian needs at the border, including medical care and transportation. That figure is significantly lower than the \$800 million sought by Nielsen.

NATION

Trump urges Venezuela's military to back Guaido

By ZEKE MILLER
Associated Press

MIAMI — President Donald Trump on Monday pleaded with Venezuela's military to support opposition leader Juan Guaido and issued a dire warning if they continue to stand with President Nicolas Maduro's government.

"You will find no safe harbor, no easy exit and no way out. You will lose everything," Trump said in a speech at Florida International University in Miami before large American and Venezuelan flags.

Trump added, "We seek a peaceful transition of power, but all options are open."

The Venezuelan military could play a decisive role in the stalemate but has largely remained loyal to Maduro.

In remarks broadcast on state television, Maduro accused the U.S. president of speaking in an "almost Nazi style" and lashed out at Trump for thinking he can deliver orders to Venezuela's military.

"Who is the commander of the armed forces, Donald Trump from Miami?" Maduro said. "They think they're the owners of the country."

Trump said "a new day is coming in Latin America" as he sought to rally support for Guaido among the largest Venezuelan community in the U.S. The U.S. recognizes him as the country's rightful president and condemns Maduro's government and its socialist policies.

As the monthlong political crisis stretched on, the military has blocked the U.S. from moving tons of humanitarian aid airlifted in recent days to the Colombian border with Venezuela. The aid shipments have been meant in part to dramatize the hyperinflation and shortages of food and medicine that are gripping Venezuela. Trump said of Maduro, "He would rather see his people starve than give them aid."

Critics say Maduro's re-election last year was fraudulent, making his second term illegal. Venezuela's power struggle is headed to a potentially violent showdown Saturday, when Guaido will try to run caravans of U.S. humanitarian aid across the Venezuelan border from Colombia. Maduro denies a humanitarian crisis exists, blaming the Trump administration for mounting a coup against him.

More than 2 million Venezuelans have fled the country in the last two years, most flooding across the border into Colombia, Brazil and Peru. Those left behind struggle to afford scarce supplies of food and medicine as inflation soars.

Maduro maintains support from Russia, China and Turkey, while Guaido has won recognition from dozens of world leaders in Latin America and Europe who are demanding that Maduro either hold new elections or step down.

So far, Maduro isn't budging. In a recent interview with The Associated Press, Maduro said Venezuela is ready to make an economic rebound once Trump removes his "infected hand" from the country that sits atop the world's largest petroleum reserves.

Trump urged the Venezuelan military



ANDREW HARNICK/AP

Members of the audience wave Venezuelan and American flags as President Donald Trump speaks to Venezuelan-Americans at the Florida Ocean Bank Convocation Center at Florida International University in Miami on Monday.

Maduro announces a concert to rival opposition backer Branson's

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO
Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — Refusing to back down amid a mounting battle over Venezuela's humanitarian crisis, the government of President Nicolas Maduro announced Monday that it will hold its own huge concert to rival one being organized by billionaire Richard Branson, a backer of opposition leader Juan Guaido.

Information Minister Jorge Rodriguez said the government will throw a concert Saturday and Sunday on Venezuela's side of the border — opposite one in Colombia being spearheaded by Branson, the wealthy British adventurer and founder of the Virgin Group. Stepping up the standoff, Rodriguez also promised to deliver 20,000 tons of government-subsidized food to the poor in the Colombian border city of Cucuta, where tons of aid from the United States is now sitting earmarked for struggling Venezuelans.

Maduro is vowing not to let the U.S. aid enter Venezuela, and he announced on state television Monday evening that his government would import 300 tons of aid from Russia that he said will arrive soon. He said Venezuela paid for the Russian goods and isn't a country of beggars, lashing out at President Donald Trump for thinking he can force in unwanted assistance.

"They want to enslave us," Maduro said. "That's the truth."

The rival bids for aid and concerts to shore up support are part of a tense effort by both Maduro and the opposition to break a monthlong stalemate over power in Venezuela. Maduro is holding on with



FERNANDO VERGARA/AP

A Venezuelan woman with a baby reads a flyer given to her by Venezuelan politicians in exile inviting people to support a planned aid delivery Saturday in La Parada.

the military's backing and relying on powerful allies like Russia in a conflict with increasingly Cold War-like dimensions. Guaido, meanwhile, is relying on the support of the international community, including the United States and powerful cultural allies like Branson.

In an exclusive interview with The Associated Press, Branson said Monday that he hopes the concert he is staging will save lives by raising money for "much-needed medical help" for crisis-torn Venezuela, which is suffering from hyperinflation and widespread shortages of food and medicine.

to accept Guaido's offer of amnesty and refrain from violence against those opposing Maduro's government. He praised the Venezuelan opposition, saying of the people of Venezuela, "They are turning the page on dictatorship and there will be no going back."

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said earlier Monday that the U.S. "knows where military officials and their families have money hidden throughout the world."

South Florida is home to more than 100,000 Venezuelans and Venezuelan-Americans, the largest concentration in the country. Speaking in the presidential battleground state, Trump also sought to draw a contrast with the policies of progressive Democrats that he branded as "socialist" as he gears up for re-election.

Trump said "socialism has so completely ravaged" Venezuela "that even the world's largest reserves of oil are not enough to keep the lights on." He added, "This will never happen to us."

"Socialism promises prosperity, but it delivers poverty," he said.

Trump was introduced by first lady Melania Trump and joined by Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and Florida Sens. Marco Rubio and Rick Scott, who have all been outspoken in their criticism of Maduro's government. Trump also spoke of the socialist governments in Cuba and Nicaragua, which have large expatriate communities in the Miami area.

"Socialism is dying and liberty, prosperity and democracy are being reborn" throughout the hemisphere, Trump said, expressing hope that soon, "this will become the first free hemisphere in all of human history."

In Cuba, the foreign minister, Bruno Rodriguez, tweeted that he considered Trump's speech "offensive" and that it "confirms the threat of military aggression against Venezuela." He added, "Humanitarian aid is a pretext for a war."

Shortly after Trump ended his speech, he tweeted: "I ask every member of the Maduro regime: End this nightmare of poverty, hunger and death. LET YOUR PEOPLE GO. Set your country free! Now is the time for all Venezuelan Patriots to act together, as one united people. Nothing could be better for the future of Venezuela!"

Guaido addressed the crowd in a prerecorded video released by the White House and thanked Trump and the state of Florida for their support.

"Trump said the U.S. is 'profoundly grateful' to its dissenters and exiles who have protested and raised alarms about the actions of the Maduro government. But his administration has also come under criticism for not doing enough to grant asylum to those fleeing the country."

"President Trump is two-faced on the Venezuela issue," said Florida Democratic Party Chairwoman Terrie Rizzo. "He talks about fighting the Maduro regime, but his administration keeps deporting and detaining Venezuelans fleeing repression from the Maduro regime."

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NATION

NC hearing on absentee ballot falsification opens

By AMY GARDNER
The Washington Post

RALEIGH, N.C. — State election officials said a political operative for Republican Mark Harris orchestrated a complex scheme to illegally collect and falsify absentee ballots last year, hiding evidence of the scheme as it unfolded and obstructing the state's investigation after the election.

Those explosive charges opened an evidentiary hearing Monday in Raleigh, where the North Carolina State Board of Elections began hearing testimony from its staff to decide whether enough ballots were tampered with to taint the outcome of the 9th Congressional District race.

nal District race.

The board has the power to call for a new election or certify the November results. According to unofficial results in the nation's last undecided congressional race, Harris leads Democrat Dan McCready by just 905 votes.

The state board's executive director, Kim Strach, told the five-member board Monday that Leslie McCrae Dowless, a longtime political operative from Bladen County, paid workers to collect hundreds of absentee ballots from voters, a felony in North Carolina. Dowless and his employees used various methods to obtain signatures and witness signatures and filled out blank or incomplete ballots, Strach said. They operated in both Bladen and Robeson counties, submitting as many as 1,240 ballots overall in the general election.

Also, they went to great lengths to avoid "raising red flags" with election officials, said Strach's first witness, Lisa Britt. They mailed no more than nine or 10 ballots at a time, and they made sure to mail them from the post offices nearest the voters' homes, even though many of the ballots were signed and witnessed en masse at Dowless' office.

They took pains to use the same ink for voter and witness signatures and to ensure stamps were affixed to the ballot envelopes in a way that didn't reveal a pattern, Britt said.

"I had placed a stamp upside down" on one of the ballot envelopes, Britt testified. "Mr. Dowless fussed at me about that. I guess one or two wouldn't have mattered, but if you've got 10 or 15 coming in that way, they're going to say, 'Now hey, wait a minute.'"

Strach did not say that Harris knew of the scheme.

The election has been in limbo since November, when evidence first surfaced that Dowless, whom Harris hired to lead his absentee-ballot program and other get-out-the-vote operations, had collected ballots illegally in Bladen County.

The allegations have prompted Democrats to demand a new election, while Republicans have called repeatedly for Harris to

be sworn in, citing the absence of public evidence that fraud affected the outcome or that Harris knew of the scheme.

The investigation has refocused the national debate about election fraud. Republicans, led by President Donald Trump, have alleged widespread voter fraud and advocated strict ID laws and criminal prosecutions.

Democrats have argued that the kind of in-person fraud Republicans have targeted is rare, accusing their opponents of trying to hinder ballot access and intimidate voters who typically vote Democratic.

The North Carolina case reverses those roles in some ways.

Sanders announces 2020 candidacy

By JUANA SUMMERS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, whose insurgent 2016 presidential campaign reshaped Democratic politics, announced Tuesday that he is running for president in 2020.

"Our campaign is not only about defeating Donald Trump," the self-described democratic socialist said in an email to supporters. "Our campaign is about transforming our country and creating a government based on the principles of economic, social, racial and environmental justice."

An enthusiastic progressive who embraces proposals ranging from Medicare for all to free college tuition, Sanders, 77, stunned the Democratic establishment in 2016 with his spirited challenge to Hillary Clinton. While she ultimately became the party's nominee, his campaign helped lay the groundwork for the leftward lurch that has dominated Demo-

cratic politics in the Trump era.

The question now for Sanders is whether he can stand out in a crowded field of Democratic presidential candidates

who also embrace many of his policy ideas and are newer to the national political stage. That's far different from 2016, when he was Clinton's lone progressive adversary.

Still, there is no question that Sanders will be a formidable contender for the Democratic nomination. He won more than 13 million votes in 2016 and dozens of primaries and caucuses. He opened his campaign with nationwide organization and a proven small-dollar fundraising effort.

"We're gonna win," Sanders

told CBS. He said he was going to launch "what I think is unprecedented in modern American history": a grassroots movement "to lay the groundwork for transforming the economic and political life of this country."

Also, Sanders could be well-positioned to compete in the nation's first primary in neighboring New Hampshire, which he won by 22 points in 2016. But he won't have the state to himself.

Sen. Kamala Harris, of California, another Democratic presidential contender, was in New Hampshire on Monday and said she'd compete for the state. She also appeared to take a dig at Sanders.

"The people of New Hampshire will tell me what's required to compete in New Hampshire," she told shoppers at a bookstore in Concord. "But I will tell you, I'm not a democratic socialist."

Sen. Elizabeth Warren, of near-by Massachusetts, will be in New Hampshire on Friday.



Sanders



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVALES/AP

Roger Stone leaves federal court in Washington on Feb. 1.

Stone deletes, reposts photo of judge presiding over trial

The Washington Post

Days after a federal judge imposed a limited gag order on him, President Donald Trump confidant Roger Stone posted a photograph of that judge to his Instagram page and included her name, a close-up of her face and what appeared to be the crosshairs of a gun sight near her head.

Stone deleted the picture soon after, then reposted it without the crosshairs before deleting the second post.

U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson is presiding over Stone's criminal trial, in which he has pleaded not guilty to charges of lying about his efforts to gather information about hacked 2016 Democratic Party emails that were published by WikiLeaks.

Jackson imposed the gag order Friday, telling Stone that he could not make statements to the media about his case near the federal courthouse in Washington but imposing no other restrictions on his ability to make public comments.

The judge put greater constraints on attorneys and potential witnesses, telling them not

to make statements that could prejudice jurors.

In the text accompanying the first post, Stone referred to special counsel Robert Mueller, who brought the case against him.

"Through legal trickery Deep State hit man Robert Mueller has guaranteed that my upcoming show trial is before Judge Amy Berman Jackson," Stone wrote, and added that Jackson is "an Obama appointed judge" and the "#fixisin."

The U.S. Marshals Service, which provides security to federal judges, responded to a request for comment.

In a text message to The Washington Post on Monday, Stone said the photograph of Jackson had been posted by a "volunteer" who helps him with his social media accounts.

"The photo has been misinterpreted, and in no way did I mean to threaten the judge or disrespect the court," Stone wrote. "(It is a random photo selected from the internet and was posted at my direction. Because it was open to misinterpretation, I have ordered it taken down.")

Source: Rosenstein to leave DOJ next month

By MATT ZAPOTOSKY
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein plans to leave the Justice Department in mid-March, an official familiar with the matter said Monday night, and an announcement from his successor is expected imminently.

Rosenstein, the No. 2 Justice Department official who has spent nearly two years in the hot seat after he appointed Robert Mueller to lead an investigation into whether President Donald Trump's campaign conspired with Russia to interfere in the 2016 election, had made it known in recent weeks that he planned to leave if and when a new attorney general was confirmed by the Senate.

With William Barr's ascension to that post last week, Rosenstein has set more precise timelines for departure — though the offi-

cial stressed that his plan could shift if needed to ensure a smooth transition.

People familiar with the matter said the administration has decided to nominate Jeffrey Rosen, the deputy secretary of transportation, to take over the job. He would need to be confirmed by the Senate, which probably would occur after Rosenstein leaves.

The news of Rosenstein's expected departure date comes as the deputy attorney general is again facing allegations from former acting FBI Director Andrew McCabe that he talked about taking dramatic steps against Trump

after the president fired James Comey as FBI director in May 2017.

McCabe said in an interview with CBS' "60 Minutes" on Sunday that Rosenstein broached the idea of ousting Trump by using the 25th Amendment, or of wearing a wire to secretly record him in the White House.

"He said, 'I never get searched when I go into the White House. I could easily wear a recording device. They wouldn't know it was there,'" McCabe said, describing what he said Rosenstein told him. "He was not joking."

The interview sparked an angry reaction from Trump, who said on Twitter that it appeared Rosenstein and McCabe were "planning a very illegal act."

The official, though, said Rosenstein's departure was expected before that and the timeline was not affected by McCabe's recent comments.



Rosenstein

NATION

W.Va. teachers walk out over education bill

Strike comes nearly a year after strike that started national 'Red4Ed' movement

By JOHN RABY
Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Nearly a year to the day after West Virginia teachers went on a strike that launched a national "Red4Ed" movement, they're doing it again.

Unions called a statewide walkout Tuesday over complicated education legislation that they view as lacking their input and as retaliation for last year's strike.

How long this one goes on will be a day-to-day decision, leaders of three unions for teachers and school service workers said at a news conference Monday.

"We are left with no other choice," said Fred Albert, president of the American Federation of Teachers' West Virginia

chapter.

The 2018 walkout launched the national movement that included strikes in Kentucky, Oklahoma, Arizona, Washington state and, more recently, Los Angeles and Denver. Teachers in Oakland, Calif., have authorized a strike starting Thursday.

Now the movement has come full circle.

Nearly all of West Virginia's 55 counties called off public school classes Tuesday.

The unions have said lawmakers never asked for their insight into what has become a rushed process in the Senate, which narrowly passed an amended bill Monday night. It now goes back to the House of Delegates.

West Virginia Education Association President Dale Lee



JOHN RABY/AP

Striking teachers wave at passing cars outside Pocahontas High School in Pocahontas, W.Va., on Tuesday. Teachers across the state walked out Tuesday over a complex education bill.

said that, based on the Senate's actions, "it appears that they are more interested in listening to the outside interests than they are the educators across West Virginia."

"We will work as closely as we can to get a resolution, but at this point, there doesn't seem to be a resolution."

One sticking point has been a provision to create the state's first charter schools, which the unions believe would erode tra-

ditional public education but bill advocates say would give parents more school choices. Charter school laws have been enacted in 43 other states and Washington, D.C.

The Senate version would allow for up to seven charter schools statewide and provide for up to 1,000 education savings accounts for parents to pay for private school. The accounts would be for special-needs students and those

who have been bullied.

The House version does not call for such savings accounts and would limit charter schools to one each in Cabell and Kanawha counties.

Senate President Mitch Cantrich said the bill found a middle ground and has "great provisions." It would give teachers additional 5 percent pay raises on top of 5 percent raises they received after last year's strike.

Ginsburg returns to Supreme Court bench

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was back on the bench Tuesday for the first time since her recent cancer surgery as the Supreme Court returned from its winter break and resumed hearing cases.

Ginsburg, 85, was the first justice to ask a question during the oral arguments in a case centering on whether the government could be considered a "person" able to challenge a patent.

Ginsburg participated in a private conference Friday with her colleagues as they considered which cases to accept for review, said court spokeswoman Kathleen Arberg.

Ginsburg missed January arguments after undergoing a pulmonary lobectomy Dec. 21 to remove two malignant nodules from her left lung. It was the first time the justice had missed oral arguments since she joined the court in 1993, even though she has had two bouts with cancer in that time.

The justice's nearly two-month absence was about what most cancer specialists say should be expected of a person recovering



STEPHAN SAVOLA/AP

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, seen Jan. 30, made her return to the Supreme Court bench Tuesday, eight weeks after surgery for lung cancer.

from such a serious operation.

During the court's hearings in January, Ginsburg worked from home reviewing briefings and arguments in the January cases, and Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. said she would participate in deciding them.

She has also been involved in previous private conferences, and was part of the majority when the court granted an emergency order blocking implementation of a restrictive Louisiana abortion law.

Ginsburg was treated for colorectal cancer in 1999, and pancreatic cancer was discovered at a very early stage 10 years

later. She scheduled treatment for both during the court's off days, and did not miss a day of oral argument.

She has also suffered broken ribs several times, including last November after a fall in her chambers. That actually turned out to be lucky, as it was during treatment for that injury that the malignant nodules were discovered.

Ginsburg has said repeatedly in interviews that she will continue in her role on the court as long as she feels she is able to do the job. She has hired law clerks through the 2020 term.

Wis. governor looks to decriminalize pot, legalize its medical use

Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. — Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers announced Monday that his budget will include proposals to decriminalize possession of small amounts of marijuana for personal use and legalize medical marijuana.

The new Democratic governor said it was time for Wisconsin to join more than 30 other states and the District of Columbia in legalizing medical marijuana. The governor noted that citizens in 16 counties and two cities in Wisconsin voted by significant margins in nonbinding referendums last year to approve medical marijuana.

Under the proposal, a physician or a practitioner under the direction of a physician could recommend the use of medical marijuana to alleviate symptoms related to medical conditions such as cancer, glaucoma, post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic pain, severe nausea and seizures.

The proposal would decriminalize possession, manufacturing or distribution of marijuana in amounts of 25 grams or less.

The plan also would establish an expungement procedure for individuals convicted of possessing,

manufacturing or distributing less than 25 grams of marijuana who have completed their sentence or probation.

"It's not just about access to health care; it's about connecting the dots between racial disparities and economic inequity," Evers said. "Too many people, often persons of color, spend time in our criminal justice system just for possessing small amounts of marijuana. That doesn't make our communities stronger or safer."

Evers also wants to get rid of the yearly physician's certification needed for use of cannabidiol, also known as CBD oil, which is used to treat seizures.

His proposal is unlikely to win approval in the Republican-controlled Legislature.

"Without having specific details, his proposal appears to go too far," Republican Assembly Speaker Robin Vos said. "It makes it easier to get recreational marijuana and provides a pathway to full legalization, which I do not support. I'm open to medical marijuana when it's prescribed by a doctor but it has to be done in a targeted way without allowing recreational use."

NATION

‘Pass it down’ WWII veteran for whom a stranger once bought a meal continues tradition by treating military members

By SUSAN CHRISTIAN
GOULDING

The Orange County (Calif.) Register

World War II veteran Edmund Rusinek turned 92 years old Tuesday. To mark that milestone, he treated himself to a rather extravagant gift — the honor of buying some \$1,500 worth of meals for military families who happened into the Rossmoor, Calif., Chick-fil-A the weekend before last.

It wasn't the first time Rusinek surprised active service people with his largess. But it was his most generous.

"This tradition, so to speak, got started in 1945 when I was a draftee training in Little Rock, Arkansas," Rusinek said. "To take a break from the GI food, some of my buddies and I left base for some good ol' Southern food.

"At the restaurant, an elderly gentleman stepped up to us and asked, 'Can you do me a favor? Will you let me buy your lunch? If you want to thank me, pass it down.'"

Rusinek, whose birthday is Feb. 19, has been passing it down ever since he landed his half-century career in engineering. "Someone did it for me, and I want to do it for others," he said.

And he uses the same verbiage that so touched him all those years ago: "Can you do me a favor and let me buy your lunch?"

Rusinek and his wife, Krystyna, raised their three children in Rossmoor, a bedroom community wedged between Los Alamitos and Seal Beach.

"Fortunately, I live near an air base and a Navy base," Rusinek said, referring to the Joint Forces Training Base and the Naval Weapons Station. "There are lots of kids in the military around here, and they all look so young to me."

Rusinek, who grew up outside of Detroit, said he remembers "the feeling of being a long way from home and family."

"Back then, towns would throw Saturday night dances for servicemen stationed there so they



PHOTOS ABOVE AND BELOW RIGHT BY CHICK-FIL-A MANAGER GIOIA ARKIS/Orange County Register

Army veteran Edmund Rusinek chats on Feb. 8 with military members at a Chick-fil-A in Rossmoor, Calif., where he bought them meals to celebrate his 92nd birthday.



JEFF GRITCHEN/Orange County Register

Rusinek is continuing a tradition of buying meals for military members.

could get off base to socialize," he recalled. "There's nothing lonelier than training camp on weekends."

Times have changed, he noted.



"Everyone is too busy with their own lives," Rusinek said. "The only thing the kids have around here is the American Legion, and that's a bunch of old geezers

like me."

Rusinek was a freshman at the University of Michigan when he was drafted into the Army.

"We were preparing for the in-

vasion of Japan," he said. "I had completed 16 weeks of training when the bomb was dropped (on Hiroshima)."

Instead of in Japan, Rusinek wound up at the Czechoslovakian border for two years as a staff sergeant. Afterward, he returned to Michigan and finished his engineering degree, ultimately finding work at North American Aviation in Downey.

He has yet to forgive Rockwell for taking control of North American Aviation in a late-1960s merger. "They stole it," he said.

Rusinek retired from Boeing at age 75 after it bought Rockwell's space divisions in 1996, but he still considers himself an "NAA man."

Chick-fil-A offers discounts to active-duty service people and veterans, which is why Rusinek chose it for his birthday bash. "A lot of military people and their families go there," he said. "I want them to know that someone cares."

On Feb. 8, Rusinek dropped by the neighborhood Chick-fil-A and handed a wad of cash to manager Gioia Arkis — as well as flyers explaining his contribution. She quickly burned through the first installment the following Saturday morning, at which point he gave her permission to use his credit card.

"Edmund is a regular customer," Arkis said. "He always comes in for a salad, cookies and coffee. We call him our local sweet thing."

The following day, Rusinek hung out at the restaurant for three hours shaking hands and snapping photos with service people. "Everybody was so happy," Arkis said.

Arkis estimated that, between the cash and the credit card, Rusinek spent about \$1,500 on meals.

Rusinek reacted with surprise over that total. "Really? I guess I'll know for sure when I get my credit card bill in the mail."

Whatever the tally, it was worth it, he added, saying, "I'm not a rich man — but this I can afford."

Tinder-style app takes a swipe at cattle breeding

By AINE QUINN
Bloomberg

Cows and bulls searching for "moove love" now have a mobile app to help their breeders.

A U.K. farming startup introduced a Tinder-style app, called Tudder, that lets farmers find breeding matches by viewing pictures of cattle with details of their age, location and owner. Users hear a mooring sound as they swipe — right to show they're interested or left to reject possible matches.

Hectare, which designed the app, says it "seeks to unite sheepish farm animals with their soul-

mates." Selling animals using social media can speed up a process that often involves transporting animals long distances for breeding.

"Tudder is a new swipe-led matchmaking app, helping farm animals across the U.K. find breeding partners in the quest for moove love," according to the Apple app store description.

Farmers that swipe right on an image of a particular cow — or group of cows — are directed to Hectare's livestock-buying website, with a chance to contact the owner or make an offer.

The listing website includes information on the animal's charac-

ter and any health issues.

Profile descriptions range from "nice big strong sorts make nice suckler cows" to "quiet well grown young bull ready to work," and farmers can also restrict their online search by whether the animal is organic, pedigree or on a farm where tuberculosis has been detected.

Marcus Lampard, a farmer in Carmarthenshire in southwest Wales, has one pedigree beef shorthorn breeding bull listed on the app and says it's a lot easier to sell livestock online.

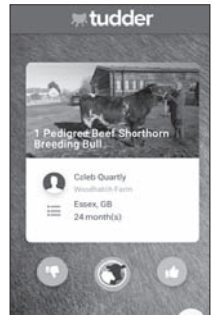
"Going to market is a nuisance," he said by telephone. "If I go to an open market with a bull, and then

maybe bring it back, it shuts everything down on the farm for at least two weeks."

Lampard, 76, said his daughter lists the cows online for him. "At my age, we think we're quite techy, but our grandchildren think we're hopeless," he said.

Hectare raised more than \$3.9 million from investors including government programs, author Richard Koch and tennis player Andy Murray, according to its website.

The company didn't immediately respond to a request for comment after the app was described in the Sunday Times.



Screenshot of Tudder app

NATION

Police departments scramble to fill ranks

By DAVID MONTGOMERY
Stataline.org

AUSTIN, Texas—A recruiting video from the Fort Worth Police Department features a look-alike of Chewbacca from “Star Wars.” Gimmicky? Perhaps. But it’s gotten nearly 3 million views online, and the department believes it’s helped recruit as many as 50 officers.

In Florida, the Clearwater Police Department hopes to entice potential job candidates with a video that plays at outdoor concerts, this one pitching the coastal region’s surf, sandy beaches and majestic sunsets.

And in Houston, where law enforcement agencies have been steadily losing officers, Harris County Sheriff’s Office deputies drive vehicles inscribed with an online address to attract potential recruits.

Police departments across the country are scrambling to fill their ranks. The loss of tens of thousands of officers over the past decade has compromised effectiveness and imposed greater demands on those still on the job, according to police officials and outside experts.

“It makes it much more difficult,” said Bill Johnson, executive director of the National Association of Police Organizations, a coalition of unions and associations representing 241,000 police officers across the country. “From the public’s point of view, it’s a risk to public safety because you have fewer officers out there to respond to calls.”

Among the causes of the officer shortage are a rash of retirements by senior officers from the baby boomer generation, better paying jobs in the private sector, a robust economy with low unemployment rates and, in many cases, grievances over salary and morale.

There is also the “Ferguson effect,” a reference to the St. Louis suburb that in 2014 exploded in a dayslong protest over the shooting of a black teenager by a white police officer.

The U.S. Justice Department later determined that the officer in Ferguson had acted in self-defense. But that incident and others involving white officers shooting unarmed blacks have fueled animosity toward the police, especially in minority communities.

Potential applicants might think twice before plunging into a profession that could subject them to scorn, law enforcement officials say. Police officers now feel they are being perceived as “the new bad guy,” according to a 2016 survey by the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

“When you get into this career in our day and age, it was a very popular profession,” said Clearwater Police Chief Dan Slaughter, who has been a policeman for more than a quarter-century. Now, he said, an undetermined number of potential recruits are being “scared away” by a changed environment.

Then there are the dangers of



COURTESY OF THE FORT WORTH POLICE DEPARTMENT/TNS

Fort Worth Police Officer Jimmy Pollozani gets ready to make the rounds with his partner of the day, Chewbacca (Sgt. Trey Gibbs), in a “Star Wars”-themed recruiting video that has drawn nearly 3 million views on social media.



COURTESY OF THE AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT/TNS

Austin police officers Leah Hanson and Eduardo Pineda show off their tattoos. Like many police departments, Austin’s has relaxed rules barring tattoos in a bid to attract more recruits.

the job. Being an officer means facing the prospect of death or injury on any given day.

On-duty law enforcement deaths totaled 144 in 2018, a 12 percent increase over the previous year, according to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund. In Texas alone, four Houston police officers were shot and wounded in late January. Five Dallas officers were killed in an ambush in 2016.

The number of law enforcement personnel reached a peak of 724,690 in 2013. Police departments lost 23,500 officers over the next three years, according to a 2018 report by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Many departing officers counsel friends and family members

to find another career path.

“They’re telling their children, ‘Don’t be a police officer,’” NAPO’s Johnson said.

Fewer officers means longer response times, heavier caseloads and fewer opportunities to build relations in the community. The shortages also result in more overtime shifts, which gives officers a financial boost but can increase stress, fatigue and burnout.

In a survey of about 400 law enforcement agencies, only 12 percent said they were not short on full-time personnel, according to the Police Executive Research Forum, a Washington-based organization. More than 40 percent reported that their personnel shortages have increased over

the past five years.

Michael Bullock, 28, a former state legislative aide who has been on the Austin Police Department for a year, said he carefully weighed what he was getting into before he joined the force.

Because of “all the angst toward law enforcement,” he said, “well-meaning friends sometimes asked, ‘Are you sure that’s what you want to do?’”

“It’s a pretty controversial profession,” Bullock said. “There’s still plenty of people out there that support law enforcement, but the perspective these days is that lots of people don’t like the police.”

Recruiting has become an essential mission as police departments, sheriff’s offices and state agencies appeal for potential candidates through virtually every conceivable venue, from billboards to social media. Recruiting teams from larger departments dispatch representatives across the country for weeks at a time to look for job candidates.

Many police recruiters are focusing on minorities, to more closely match the racial demographics of their communities. They are offering financial incentives to applicants who speak Spanish and recruiting on the campuses of predominantly black and Hispanic universities.

Many also are boosting salaries and benefits, offering signing bonuses, college tuition, take-home vehicles, health club memberships and, in some cases, student loan forgiveness and child care assistance.

Starting salaries can vary widely, from the mid-\$30,000s to more than \$60,000. Salaries for veteran officers can often exceed \$100,000.

The number of racial and ethnic minorities in U.S. police departments nearly doubled over a 26-year period, according to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics,

reaching 27 percent of all staff in 2013, up from 15 percent in 1987.

Some police recruiters also are relaxing rules on past drug use, according to a Police Executive Research Forum survey. Tattoos are no longer forbidden at many police departments.

“We don’t want to tell people, ‘Hey, you’re going to have to wear long sleeves all year round in Houston,’” said Joe Gamaldi, president of the Houston Police Officers’ Union, of his department’s decision more than a year ago to permit tattoos.

To demonstrate its new tattoo-friendliness, the Austin Police Department posted photos of tattooed officers on social media to celebrate National Tattoo Day. Since 2015, the department has increased its recruiting team from 10 to 25.

In Lansing, Mich., Police Chief Mike Yankowski is using the recruitment of college athletes as a model, personally courting applicants and their families through texts, phone calls and visits. He’s also established a “farm” system that includes younger cadets and police explorers affiliated with the department.

“We’re trying to secure that talent way ahead of the curve,” Yankowski said. “It’s still the most noble profession out there.”

One reliable target for potential recruits is the military, as evidenced by the 20 law enforcement agencies at a January jobs fair at Fort Hood in Central Texas.

Most recruiters were from Texas, but the fair also drew state police agencies from Missouri and Louisiana and a small-town police department from eastern New Mexico.

Hundreds of possible job-seekers, many in military uniform, milled among tables staffed by recruiters and stacked with brochures.

At the Dallas table, Senior Cpl. Dane White, 51, a recruiter, chatted with Army Spc. Nick Hinojosa, who said he will be leaving the service in about six to 12 months and is thinking of a move into law enforcement, maybe as an undercover officer.

White concedes that policing is “not a real big popular thing like it was 20 years ago,” but at the same time, he said, there are still plenty of potential recruits out there.

Missouri State Trooper Tony Sandoval sat at another table at the fair. He said that when he confronts uncertainty at recruiting events like this one, he advises potential candidates that they have an opportunity to change the perception of law enforcement from the inside.

“For some, it becomes a difficult decision whether to get into law enforcement or not,” Sandoval said.

“I tell them, if you want to serve your community, you want to try to make a difference, this is the job for you.”

WORLD

Religious orders apologize for abuse inaction

By NICOLE WINFIELD

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Catholic religious orders from around the world apologized Tuesday for having failed to respond when their priests raped children, acknowledging that their family-like communities blinded them to sexual abuse and led to misplaced loyalties, denial and cover-ups.

The two umbrella organizations representing the world's religious orders issued a joint statement ahead of Pope Francis' sex abuse prevention summit, which opens Thursday. They vowed to implement accountability measures going forward to ensure that cover-ups by religious superiors end and that children are always

safe in the presence of clergy.

With a few exceptions, religious orders have largely flown under the radar in the decadeslong scandal, since the focus has been on how diocesan bishops protected their priests and moved them from parish to parish where they were free to abuse again.

Yet congregations such as the Jesuits, Salesians and Christian Brothers have some of the worst records, since they too moved abusers around and had easy access to young victims as many orders specialize in running schools.

The Union of Superiors General represents the leadership of male religious orders, which count around 133,000 priests globally. The female branch, the Interna-



GREGORIO BORDIA/AP

Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Chicago archbishop, right, and Monsignor Charles Scicluna, Malta archbishop, take seats ahead of a news conference at the Vatican on Monday addressing a Vatican summit later this week on preventing clergy sex abuse.

tional Union of Superiors General, represents some 500,000 religious sisters. They will each send around a dozen representatives to the Vatican sex abuse summit.

In the statement, the groups said they were ashamed at how they had failed the most vulnerable they were meant to serve and blamed "the strong sense of family" that their communities fostered for having blinded them to the warning signs.

"It resulted in a misplaced loyalty, errors in judgment, slowness to act, denial and, at times, cover-up," they said. "We still need con-

version and we want to change. We want to act with humility. We want to see our blind spots. We want to name any abuse of power."

To that end, the statement also condemned recent revelations of priests and bishops who sexually abused seminarians and nuns — an abuse of power that has largely gone unpunished since the victims are adults.

While noting the pope's summit is focused on the protection of minors, the groups pledged to find a response.

"This is a matter of grave and shocking concern," they said.

Honda to shut plant in Brexit-shaken Britain

TOKYO — Japanese carmaker Honda plans to close its car factory in western England in 2021, a fresh blow to the British economy as businesses struggle with the uncertainty associated with leaving the European Union next month.

The company announced the decision, which will imperil 3,500 jobs and possibly many more, at a news conference in Tokyo.

Honda's president and CEO, Takahiro Hachigoji, said the decision was not related to Brexit but was based on what made most sense for its global competitiveness in light of the need to accelerate its production of electric vehicles.

Still, experts say the uncertainty surrounding Brexit will likely have been a contributing factor in a decision like Honda's. There is no doubt of the impact that the EU will mean. In a worst case it could lead to heavy tariffs and border checks, raising costs and slowing deliveries.

Suicide bombing kills 3 near Cairo bazaar

CAIRO — The death toll from a late night suicide blast near Cairo's famed tourist market rose to three on Tuesday after a police officer died of his wounds, Egyptian security officials said.

The fatalities at the attack near the Khan el-Khalili bazaar in the heart of Cairo were all policemen. The explosion late Monday also wounded two other policemen and a woman, the officials said.

The Interior Ministry said the attacker, al-Hasan Abdallah, 37, blew himself up after police officers approached to arrest him. He was wanted in a bombing Friday near a mosque in Cairo's district of Giza, and the police had been monitoring his movements, the statement said.

The attacker's affiliation was not known. No militant group claimed responsibility for the bombings.

Nigerian leader tells forces to be 'ruthless'

UGHELLI, Nigeria — Nigeria's president says security forces should be "ruthless" ahead of the country's postponed election and that anyone who tries to disturb the vote "will do so at the expense of his own life."

President Muhammadu Buhari spoke Monday as both Nigeria's ruling party and top opposition party were set to hold the last-minute decision to delay last Saturday's vote until this Saturday.

The president's comments brought an outcry from some Nigerians since he signed a pledge last week to contribute to a peaceful election.

But a ruling party chieftain in Rivers state, Eze Chukwuemeka, said the comments didn't endorse "jungle justice, as some people are putting it. As leader, you don't sit down and watch while your nation is going down the drain."

From The Associated Press

Rallies against anti-Semitism staged in France

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN

Associated Press

PARIS — Marches and rallies against anti-Semitism are taking place across France following a series of anti-Semitic acts that shocked the country.

Former French Presidents Francois Hollande and Nicolas Sarkozy were set to join thousands of protesters and government members on the streets Tuesday.

The upsurge in anti-Semitism in France, home to the world's largest Jewish population outside Israel and the United States, reached a climax last weekend with a torrent of hate speech directed at prominent philosopher Alain Finkielkraut during a march of yellow vest anti-government protesters.

The attack came days after the government reported a big rise in incidents of anti-Semitism last year: 541 registered incidents, up 74 percent from the 311 registered in 2017.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe was to lead a group of government officials at the main rally at Paris' famed Republic Square.



JEAN-FRANCOIS BADIAS/AP

Vandalized tombs with tagged swastikas are shown in the Jewish cemetery of Quatzenheim on Tuesday.

In addition to the marches, French President Emmanuel Macron, National Assembly President Richard Ferrand and the head of Senate, Gerard Larcher, were slated to hold a moment of silence at the Shoah memorial in Paris.

Macron is not expected to attend the gather-

ing at the Republic Square but will deliver a speech at Wednesday's annual dinner by leading Jewish group CRIF.

In recent incidents, swastika graffiti was found on street portraits of Simone Veil — a survivor of Nazi death camps and a European Parliament president who died in 2017. The word "Juden" was painted on the window of a bagel restaurant in Paris, and two trees planted at a memorial honoring a young Jewish man tortured to death in 2006 were vandalized, one cut down.

Two youths were arrested Friday after they allegedly fired shots from an air rifle at a synagogue in the Paris suburb of Sarcelles, where a large Jewish community lives. Sarcelles Mayor Patrick Haddad told BFMTV on Tuesday that prosecutors consider that the motive was anti-Semitism.

Just hours ahead of Tuesday's gatherings, it emerged that a Jewish cemetery in a small Alsace town was vandalized overnight. Marie-Helene Schott, the secretary at Quatzenheim city hall, told The Associated Press that swastikas were tagged on several graves.

Israel hosts eastern Europe leaders after summit canceled

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hosted his Czech, Slovakian and Hungarian counterparts Tuesday in a series of sit-downs that replaced a high-profile summit in Jerusalem that was canceled over a rift with Poland.

The first gathering outside Europe of the Visegrad group was supposed to be a crowning achievement for Netanyahu in his outreach to central and eastern Europe to counter the traditional criticism Israel faces in international forums. But it dramatically

unraveled over a bitter exchange between Poland and Israel over how to characterize Polish behavior toward its Jewish community during and after World War II. In place of the summit, Netanyahu held back-to-back meetings with Slovak Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini, Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban before hosting all three for lunch at his official residence.

Hovering over it all was the absence of Poland, the fourth member of the group.

In brief comments alongside

Pellegrini, Netanyahu made no mention of the elephant in the room, instead discussing economic cooperation, a new cultural center and autonomous vehicles. The visiting Slovak leader pointed out his country's record of saving Jews during the Holocaust.

The fallout between Israel and Poland, typically close allies, began last week when Netanyahu, pressed by reporters accompanying his visit to Warsaw, acknowledged that "Poles cooperated with the Nazis." The comments infuriated his Polish hosts, who reject suggestions that their country col-

laborated with the Nazis and have passed a law that prohibits linking the Polish nation to the genocide of 6 million Jews.

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki announced Sunday that he was pulling out of the summit and that his foreign minister would go instead.

He then canceled Polish participation altogether the following day after Israel's acting foreign minister, Israel Katz, referenced a quote from the late former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who said that Poles "sucked anti-Semitism with their mothers' milk."

WORLD

Brazilian spiritual guru accused of sex abuse

By DIARLEI RODRIGUES, MARIO LOBAO
AND PETER PRENGAMAN
Associated Press

ABADIANIA, Brazil — For more than 40 years, spiritual healer Joao Teixeira de Faria drew people from all over the world to this small city in central Brazil, offering treatment for everything from depression to cancer.

His work was both praised — Oprah Winfrey called de Faria “inspiring” while visiting in 2012 — and heavily scrutinized. Now, de Faria, who goes by the name “Joao de Deus,” or “John of God,” is in trouble with the law.

Since December, more than 250 women including his daughter have come forward to allege abuse that ranged from being groped during treatments to rape. The mounting accusations are turning the 77-year-old spiritual guru into Brazil’s first major figure to go down in the #MeToo era, which has been slow to take off in Latin America’s largest nation despite myriad problems with gender equality.

Meanwhile, the people in Abadiania, about a two-hour drive west from the nation’s capital of Brasilia, are in disbelief. They also fear for their futures without de Faria.

“All of Abadiania depended on the work of Joao,” said Claudio Pruja, the owner of a small inn who also sometimes worked as an assistant to de Faria. “We don’t have a beach. This isn’t Copacabana.”

Indeed, de Faria’s pull was so strong that the much more affluent “new” part of the town, built in the years since the healer opened his clinic in 1976, stands in sharp contrast to the older, run-down part of town. There are brightly colored houses, swept streets, hotels with ATM machines inside — a rarity in small Brazilian cities — as well as specialty boutiques that cater to tourists, and police constantly



ERALDO PERES/AP

A woman places her hands in prayer on a wooden triangle between framed images of spiritual healer Joao Teixeira de Faria and Jesus Christ, inside the Casa de Dom Inacio in Abadiania, Brazil, in January. De Faria faces multiple accusations of sex abuse.

patrolling.

By some estimates, his “casa spiritual,” or “spiritual house,” attended to 10,000 patients a week. It was there that de Faria, who over the decades came under sharp scrutiny from critics who deemed him a charlatan, performed “psychic” surgeries that he said could heal a wide range of maladies.

Sometimes treatments were based on prayer, and sometimes they involved minor cutting into the body.

In 2012, Winfrey visited de Faria’s center and interviewed him for her talk show, writing about the experience of seeing

him cut into the breast of a woman without anesthesia.

“An overwhelming sense of peace” is how she described the experience in a column that has since been deleted on oprah.com.

Winfrey has issued a statement saying she sympathizes with the alleged victims and hopes they get justice.

According to more than 250 women, it was during the healings that de Faria molested them or began grooming them for what would lead to forced sexual contact outside the clinic.

Luciano Miranda, a public prosecutor,

told The Associated Press that his office had received testimony from women from six countries: Brazil, Germany, Belgium, Bolivia, the United States and Holland.

De Faria’s victims were of all ages, and he would often begin by turning off the lights and asking for a message, Miranda said. “The biggest fear of victims was not being believed,” Miranda said. He said some of the women said they held off talking publicly about it for years because of worry they “could lose their husbands.”

The scandal erupted when several women talked about their experiences on the show “Conversa com Bial” in December, leading to an avalanche of similar accusations in the weeks that followed.

The U.S. Embassy in Brazil published an alert asking Americans to contact Brazilian authorities if they had been abused by de Faria.

De Faria’s adult daughter, Dalva Teixeira, told Brazilian magazine *Veja* that her father frequently raped her between the ages of 10 and 14, all on the pretense of spiritual treatments.

“My father is a monster,” she told the magazine.

De Faria’s lawyers have noted that many of the allegations are decades old, and in some cases involved women who repeatedly visited the healer — putting into question the veracity of their abuse claims.

They argue their client, who has been arrested, should be released before a trial. They have called on Brazilians to know all the facts before judging.

“Lynchings are always potentially unjust and lead a society to find scapegoats in individuals,” lawyers Alberto Zacharias Toron and Luisa Moraes Albuquerque wrote in a December op-ed in daily *Folha de S. Paulo*.

The accusations against de Faria come as cases of alleged abuse have emerged in several Latin American countries.

Businesses reopening after Haitian protests

Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti

— Businesses and government offices slowly reopened across Haiti on Monday after more than a week of violent demonstrations by hundreds of thousands of protesters demanding the resignation of President Jovenel Moise over skyrocketing prices that have more than doubled for basic goods amid allegations of government corruption.

Public transportation resumed in the capital, Port-au-Prince, where people began lining up to buy food, water and gasoline as crews cleared streets of barricades thrown up during the protests.

Moise has refused to step down, though his prime minister, Jean-Henry Ceant, said over the weekend that he has agreed to reduce certain government budgets by 30 percent, limit travel of government officials and remove all nonessential privileges they enjoy, including phone cards.

Ceant also vowed to investigate alleged misspending tied to a



DIEU NALIO CHERRY/AP

Residents line up to buy propane gas in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on Monday after more than a week of violent demonstrations.

Venezuelan program that provided Haiti with subsidized oil and said he has requested that a court audit all state-owned enterprises. He also said he would increase the minimum wage and lower the prices of basic goods, although he did not provide specifics.

Many Haitians remained wary of those promises, and schools remained closed Monday amid concerns of more violence.

“The government is making statements that are not changing anything at this point,” said Hector Jean, a moto taxi driver who was waiting for customers. He recently had to buy a gallon of gas for \$6, more than twice what he

normally pays, and he has been unable to find customers who can afford to pay higher fares.

Other goods in the Western Hemisphere’s poorest nation have also doubled in price in recent weeks. A sack of rice now costs \$18 and a can of dry beans around \$7.

In addition, a gallon of cooking oil has gone up to nearly \$11 from \$7.

Inflation has been in the double digits since 2014, and the price increases are angering many people in Haiti, where about 60 percent of its nearly 10.5 million people struggle to get by on about \$2 a day.

Mexico announces closure of infamous island prison

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Mexico will close its infamous Isla Marías prison, the last island penal colony in a hemisphere once dotted with remote island jails like the one depicted in the movie “Papillon.”

President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said Monday that Mexico will relocate about two-thirds of the 659 remaining inmates and free about 200 others from the islands, 70 miles off the Pacific coast of Nayarit. The four islands — only one of which is inhabited — will be turned into a cultural and environmental education center.

The prison, founded in 1905 on Maria Madre, passed through periods of infamous brutality. When Panama closed its Isla Coiba penal colony in 2004, Isla Marías became the last one remaining in the Americas.

Lopez Obrador said the new Islas Marías cultural center will be named after Jose Revueltas, a novelist who was imprisoned there and wrote the novel “Walls of Water.”

“It is the history of punishments, of torture, of repression for more

than a century,” Lopez Obrador said of the prison, which as recently as 2013 held 8,000 inmates.

Far from the bloody reputation of places like Devil’s Island — the French Guiana penal colony shuttered in 1946 — toward the end the Islas Marías had harbored many lower-risk or well-behaved inmates for whom the “prison without walls” was viewed as a step toward release or rehabilitation. Some prisoners were even allowed to live with their families.

While the prison kept mass tourism at bay, the islands suffered severe environmental degradation from more than a century of use as a penal colony, said Ramon Ojeda Mestre, who served from 2000 to 2004 as head of the environmental recovery program for the islands.

“I expected to find uninhabited islands, but Maria Madre suffered a lot of environmental deterioration,” said Ojeda Mestre.

Ojeda Mestre has battled to reforest the island with tropical hardwoods, which had been largely cut down to build the penal colony and furnish it. He also battled to rid the uninhabited islands of invasive, non-native feral goats, dogs and cats.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

NYC aims to stop hairstyle discrimination

NY NEW YORK — New York City doesn't want people to have their hairstyles held against them, and it has unveiled a novel anti-discrimination guidelines.

The city Human Rights Commission released the guidelines Monday. The New York Times first reported the guidelines and said they're believed to be the first such measures nationwide.

They enable people to seek fines and other remedies if they've been harassed or punished in workplaces, schools or public spaces because of their hair texture or style.

Hair nets can still be required for health and safety reasons.

Rescue workers plead guilty to abandoning cats

OH NEWARK — Two women who ran an Ohio animal rescue operation have pleaded guilty to charges related to the abandonment of more than 20 cats in a trailer that was then tied shut.

They were charged in August after the Licking County Humane Society took custody of the cats left behind by the women's Pittie Paw Rescue agency.

The Advocate in Newark reported animal rescue officials found 21 live cats and two dead in the central Ohio trailer, which had no food or water for the animals. One cat had to be euthanized.

Kristin Beaupry, of Centerville, and Joyce Meisenhelder, of Heath, pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges of prohibitions concerning companion animals and abandoning animals.

Man dies after running from flaming port-a-potty

MD BALTIMORE — A man died after being engulfed in flames and running from a portable toilet that was also on fire in the parking lot of M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore on Sunday afternoon.

The man was seen running and on fire, by a security guard for M&T Bank Stadium, according to Blair Skinner, a spokesman for the Baltimore Fire Department.

By the time medics arrived, the man was dead and three portable toilets were on fire. It wasn't clear how long he had been in the toilet or what had caused the fire.

Dog back with owner after 8-month journey

ME SOUTH PARIS — A dog that went missing in Massachusetts months ago was reunited with its family after being found in Maine, 175 miles away.

The Bangor Daily News reported 5-year-old king shepherd Kaiser made his way from Ashby, Mass., to South Paris over a span of eight months. The pooch jumped a wall at the home of a woman who was caring for him before going missing.

Kaiser's owner, Tom Wollcott, and his children were reunited

THE CENSUS

13 The number of stained glass windows stolen from a shuttered church in Braddock, Pa. The nonprofit Mon Valley Initiative said a passer-by noticed the theft at the 126-year-old former First United Presbyterian Church. The church, built in 1893, shut down in 2017 and was purchased by the nonprofit last year for housing. Spokesman Jason Togyer said officials planned to retain many of the original features.



RYAN HERMENS, RAPID CITY (S.D.) JOURNAL/AP

Hold your horses

Kevin Wilson competes in a skijoring event during the Sundance Winter Festival in downtown Sundance, Wyo., over the weekend. Skiers hold onto a tow rope while being pulled by a horse and rider and collect rings along the course.

with the dog Sunday morning.

A Bethel, Maine, woman had been feeding Kaiser and called animal control, which took the dog to a no-kill shelter in South Paris. The shelter said in a Facebook post that Wollcott was then able to identify Kaiser.

Authorities rescue mountain lion from tree

CA HESPERIA — Authorities northeast of Los Angeles rescued a cat from a tree, a cat that happened to be a mountain lion.

The Victorville Daily Press reported a homeowner in Hesperia contacted authorities Saturday after noticing the big cat while working in the yard.

San Bernardino County Fire officials said firefighters were sent to the home, finding the mountain lion perched about 50 feet up the tree.

State wildlife personnel tranquilized the animal. Firefighters then lowered it to the ground using a rescue harness.

Animals rescued for 3rd time in 8 years

MO ST. LOUIS — The Humane Society of Missouri said dogs and cats were rescued from filthy conditions at the same western Missouri site for the third time in eight years.

The society said in a news release that the owner voluntarily surrendered 21 dogs and 20 cats from a site in Bates County.

The Bates County Sheriff's Office arrested the animals' owner Thursday on charges stemming from the seizure of more than 100 dogs and cats in December 2017.

The Humane Society also reported more than 50 dogs from the property in 2011.

Work release inmates aid in rescue of baby

FL NEW PORT RICHEY — Some work release inmates made a Valentine's Day rescue when a Florida couple accidentally locked their baby inside their SUV.

Pasco County Sheriff's Office spokesman Kevin Doll told WFLA-TV the parents could not afford a locksmith, and the father intended to break a window.

That's when a crew of trustees working nearby in their black-and-white striped uniforms offered to help.

They helped pry open the front door just enough for one inmate to use a coat hanger to push a button that unlocked the SUV.

The baby's mother, Shadow Lantry, told WPEC-TV the infant was "just sitting there happy" throughout the ordeal.

Ballpark mustard maker drops Chief Wahoo logo

OH CLEVELAND — The maker of Cleveland's ballpark mustard is removing the Chief Wahoo logo from its branding and packaging to maintain long-standing ties with the Cleveland Indians baseball team.

Cleveland.com reported the Indians have told official partners such as Bertman Foods Co., the maker of Bertman Original Ball-

park Mustard, those relationships can't continue unless they stop using Chief Wahoo. The caricature is widely seen as racist and offensive to Native Americans.

The Indians will stop using Chief Wahoo on player uniforms starting this season.

Peeps company leader is honored by city

PA BETHLEHEM — With prime Peeps season about to get underway, the Pennsylvania city where they're "born" honored the man who brought marshmallow chicks to the masses.

The (Allentown) Morning Call reported that Bethlehem Mayor Robert Donchez proclaimed Friday as "Bob Born Day" in a ceremony at company offices.

Born, now 94, joined his father's candy business in 1946 and figured out a way to automate production of Peeps, which had been made by hand. Today, Just Born produces about 5.5 million Peeps per day.

From wire reports

FACES

Still sorting out tragedy

Aldean: 'Probably should've gone to a few more therapy sessions' after massacre

By EMILY YAHR
The Washington Post

In the aftermath of the massacre at the Route 91 Harvest festival in October 2017, country star Jason Aldean — who was performing when the gunman started shooting — vividly remembers when he first started to emotionally recover from the horrific tragedy.

It was almost a week after the nightmare in Las Vegas, when 58 people were killed and more than 500 were injured. Aldean and his band members escaped to safety, but in the following days, they struggled with trauma and survivors' guilt. The next weekend, Aldean was invited to be on "Saturday Night Live," where he sang Tom Petty's "I Won't Back Down" as a tribute to the victims. Being back onstage and seeing the positive response to the performance helped the whole band process grief.

"The reaction we got from that show sort of changed the way we looked at a lot of that stuff," Aldean said Feb. 15 at Country Radio Seminar (CRS) in Nashville, an annual industry event for radio programmers. "It made us realize that there are still way more good people out in the world than there are bad, than this one guy who had done this insanely disgusting thing. ... It was a really healing thing for all of us."

Aldean appeared at CRS for a moderated panel called "Overcoming Obstacles," which looked at various challenges over the course of his 20-year country music career. But the crowd appeared most curious about how he handled the aftermath of Las Vegas. During a brief audience Q&A, one attendee offered a caveat that the question

might be "too personal" but asked anyway whether Aldean sought therapy after the shooting.

"I probably should've gone to a few more therapy sessions than I did," Aldean said. "But honestly, for me, just being able to talk to my guys — to talk to the people that I was close to that went through it with me, I think, is the biggest thing. Just being able to talk about it a little bit with someone who understood how I was feeling. That helped me tremendously."

Another audience member asked how Aldean addressed the tragedy with his preteen and teenage daughters. Aldean said that his oldest was "pretty shaken up thinking that I was the target of whatever was going on" and that they had an honest conversation about what happened. It was especially essential after, as typically happens with mass shootings, conspiracy theories started spreading online.

"I saw stuff out there that had my tattoos, saying that I was part of the Illuminati, which was the dumbest thing I've ever read," Aldean said. "Being able to sit them down so that they didn't go out and read some crazy story ... I think was the thing that helped them the most."

Nearly 18 months later, Aldean has gotten to know some of the injured concertgoers, whom he visited in the hospital. He said he also makes time for victims' family members if they want to come backstage and talk to him before a concert. The shooting will never not be on his mind, he said, particularly onstage during "When She Says Baby," the song they were playing when the gunfire started.

Though Aldean took it out of the set for a while, it's now part of his concerts again.

"Maybe it was a song that at one point was just fun, and we just kind of ran through it during the show — now it has a different meaning," he said. "We're fortunate to be here and get to play it one more time."

Jason Aldean was on stage when a gunman opened fire at the Route 91 Harvest festival in Las Vegas in October 2017.

Courtesy of The Green Room PR

Prolific military novelist Griffin dead at age 89

Associated Press

W.E.B. Griffin, the prolific and best-selling author of military novels, has died at age 89.

Griffin, whose real name was William E. Butterworth III, died Feb. 12. His death was confirmed Monday by his publisher, Putnam, which did not immediately provide additional details.



Griffin

A military veteran who enlisted in the Army when he was just shy of 17 and later served in the Korean War, he wrote more than 200 books under W.E.B. Griffin and various other names and sold millions of copies. His many popular series included "Badge of Honor," "Clandestine Operations" and "Presidential Agent." More than 20 novels, including the upcoming "The Attack," were written with his son, William E. Butterworth IV. Under his own name, he helped write several sequels in the 1970s to the Richard Hooker novel "M*A*S*H," the basis for the hit movie and television show about a U.S. medical unit in Korea.

A Newark, N.J., native, Griffin started using other names on his books in the 1960s because he worried that libraries wouldn't accept multiple works by the same author in a given year. His pen names included Alex Baldwin, Webb Beech and Walter E. Blake. He thought of Griffin as a pen name in the 1980s, noting on his web site that Griffin was "the mythical creature with the wings of an eagle and the loins of a lion ... which of course is how most colonels think of themselves."

Griffin's wife, the dancer and author, Emma Macalik Butterworth, died in 2003. He is survived by four children.

Iconic fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld dies

Chanel's iconic couturier, Karl Lagerfeld, whose accomplished designs as well as trademark white ponytail, high starched collars and dark enigmatic glasses dominated high fashion for the past 50 years, has died. He was around 85 years old.

Such was the enigma surrounding the German-born designer that even his age was a point of mystery for decades, with reports he had two birth certificates, one dated 1933 and the other 1938.

Chanel said Lagerfeld died early Wednesday.

Lagerfeld was one of the most hardworking figures in the fashion world holding down the top design jobs at LVMH-owned luxury label Fendi from 1977, and Paris' family-owned power-house Chanel in 1983.

Lagerfeld's designs quickly trickled down to low-end retailers, giving him an almost unprecedented impact on the entire fashion industry.

Netflix announces end of final two Marvel series

Los Angeles Times

Five years after Netflix teamed with Marvel Television for a run of series, Netflix has announced the cancellation of "The Punisher" and the conclusion of "Jessica Jones." The news, which follows last year's cancellation of "Luke Cage," "Daredevil" and "The Iron Fist," ends the Disney-owned Marvel's partnership with the streaming giant.

The demise of the two shows was confirmed in a statement by Netflix. "Marvel's 'The Punisher' will not return for a third season on Netflix," it read, acknowledging the work of showrunner Steve Lightfoot, star

Jon Bernthal and the cast and crew.

The statement went on to say that "in reviewing our Marvel programming, we have decided that the upcoming third season will also be the final season for Marvel's Jessica Jones." Thanking the cast, crew, showrunner Melissa Rosenberg and star Krysten Ritter, the statement added, "We are grateful to Marvel for five years of our fruitful partnership and thank the passionate fans who have followed these series from the beginning."

The news was alluded to in an open letter posted Monday from Marvel TV head Jeph Loeb. Published on Marvel's website as a let-

ter to Marvel Television fans," Loeb acknowledged the news without mentioning Netflix.

"We loved each and every minute of it," Loeb wrote. "And we did it all for you — the fans — who cheered for us around the world and made all the hard work worth it." He promised that Marvel TV productions would continue.

In February, Marvel confirmed a deal with Hulu for four animated series. Marvel also will be a major driver for Disney's upcoming streaming service. Called Disney+, the Netflix competitor is slated to launch by the end of the year.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Wage gap for high-earning women is unchanged

By ANDREW VAN DAM
The Washington Post

The glass ceiling is even higher in the penthouse.

Women earn enough on their own to help for 1 percent status in just one of every 22 top-earning households, new research shows. The gap hasn't narrowed for at least 20 years.

Because women face more obstacles and discrimination in the labor market, "marrying a man with good income prospects is a woman's main route to the one percent," write Jill Yavorsky, of the University of North Carolina-Charlotte; Lisa Keister, of Duke; Yue Qian, of the University of British Columbia; and Michael

Nau, of Ohio State University, in an analysis just released in American Sociological Review.

Most college graduates, half of professional school graduates and a third of business owners are women. Yet few of them break into the highest income tiers.

In 2016, households in the top 1 percent earned \$845,000 or more.

Married women are 991 percent more likely than single women to be in a 1 percent household, according to the team's analysis of Federal Reserve data collected between 1995 and 2016. The equivalent number for married men is just 70 percent.

Those figures are adjusted for race, age and the presence of children.

But married women's odds of

being in the 1 percent are higher primarily because they have access to their spouse's income. Among top-percentile households, the woman's income was needed to help the household meet the threshold for the top 1 percent only 15 percent of the time. Just 4.5 percent of women earned enough alone to enter the 1 percent.

But Yavorsky cautions against giving one partner credit for 100 percent of their paycheck.

Consider novelist MacKenzie Bezos, who may soon become one of the richest women in the world, depending on how her announced divorce proceeds. She would be viewed as a spouse whose wealth was generated by her partner, but reports indicate she was critical to the success of Amazon, the online

retailer founded by her husband, Jeff Bezos, who also owns The Washington Post.

"Many men would not be where they are without having spouses that were willing to do the majority of household production and willing to subordinate their careers," Yavorsky said.

Cornell economist Francine Blau, whose four-plus decades of work on the gender wage gap have been cited thousands of times, said the new analysis was consistent with her own work. In a 2017 work with collaborator Lawrence Kahn, she found "the gender pay gap declined much more slowly at the top of the wage distribution than at the middle or bottom and, by 2010, was noticeably higher at the top," Blau said.

About 1.8 percent of self-employed, married women with advanced degrees earn enough to place themselves in the top 1 percent. Among men, the figure is 7.3 percent.

Ultra-high-earning women rely more on entrepreneurship than top-earning men, another sign women don't get as many opportunities within traditional corporate structures.

Men have more options when it comes to starting businesses, attracting investment or rising through the corporate ranks.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Feb. 20)	\$1.1581
Dollar buys (Feb. 20)	€0.8635
British pound (Feb. 20)	\$1.33
Japanese yen (Feb. 20)	108.00
South Korean won (Feb. 20)	1,099.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.2991
Canada (dollar)	1.3280
China (yuan)	6.7618
Denmark (krone)	6.5920
Egypt (pound)	17.5283
Euro	\$1.1320/0.8834
Hong Kong (dollar)	7.8490
Hungary (forint)	38.10
Israel (shekel)	3.6290
Japan (yen)	110.64
Kuwait (dinar)	0.3036
Norway (krone)	8.5990
Philippines (peso)	52.18
Poland (zloty)	3.83
Saudi Arabia (riyal)	3.7504
Singapore (dollar)	1.3553
South Korea (won)	1,126.70
Switzerland (franc)	1.0932
Thailand (baht)	31.19
Turkey (lira)	5.3026
Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.50
Discount rate	3.00
Federal funds market rate	4.40
3-month bill	2.37
30-year bond	3.00

China freezes \$1.5B of assets in online lending crackdown

By JOE McDONALD
Associated Press

BEIJING — Chinese police have investigated 380 online lenders and frozen \$1.5 billion in assets following an avalanche of scandals in the huge but lightly regulated industry, the government announced Monday.

Beijing allowed a private finance industry to flourish in order to supply credit to entrepreneurs and households that aren't served by the state-run banking system. But that threatens to become a liability for the ruling Communist Party after bankruptcies and fraud cases prompted protests and complaints of official indifference to small investors.

The Police Ministry said it launched the investigation because person-to-person, or P2P, lending was increasingly risky



Andy Wong/AP

A woman walks by a bank window panel displaying the security markers on the latest 100-yuan notes in Beijing on Monday.

and rife with complaints about fraud, mismanagement and waste.

The ministry gave no details

about arrests but said more than 100 executives were being sought by investigators and some had fled abroad. It said authorities

seized or froze 10 billion yuan, or \$1.5 billion, but gave no indication about how much might be returned to depositors.

Police said some lenders and investment vehicles were brazenly fraudulent, while others collapsed after inexperienced founders failed to manage risk.

Monday's statement said P2P lenders were investigated for complaints including wasting money, reporting phony investment plans and using illegal tactics to raise money.

Lending through online platforms grew by triple digits annually until 2017, when regulators tightened controls.

Depositors lent 1.9 trillion yuan, or \$280 billion, last year, but that was down by 50 percent from 2017, according to the Shenzhen Qiancheng Internet Finance Research Institute.

WEATHER OUTLOOK



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

Stripes SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market



Attorneys

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Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) is published weekly, days (except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and for \$1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA. Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002.

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OPINION

Democrats' Israel problem is Netanyahu

By JACKSON DIEHL

The Washington Post

The Democratic Party has problems with Israel. But Reps. Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., and Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., the new members of Congress who have attracted attention with toxic tweets and support for boycott, are not the main protagonists. They represent a minority of Americans and are isolated in the Democratic caucus.

The bigger trouble for Democrats is embodied in the man who has dominated Israeli politics for the past decade — and who is favored in upcoming national elections. Benjamin Netanyahu has doggedly and successfully worked to thwart the goal pursued by Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama and still embraced by most Democrats: a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He campaigned against Obama's nuclear deal with Iran, an initiative most Democrats still support.

Along the way, he has openly wedded Israel's government to the Republican Party and helped to divide U.S. opinion on Israel along party lines. That strategy has intensified during the Trump administration. Netanyahu has embraced, defended and even imitated a president who is regarded unfavorably by a majority of Americans and passionately despised by most Democrats. You would think a foreign leader seeking to cultivate broad sympathy in the U.S. would avoid the polarizing vortex of President Donald Trump. Yet, as he seeks a new term as prime minister, Netanyahu has gone so far as to drape a huge image of himself with Trump across a Tel Aviv office building.

The results have been predictable. Polling by several organizations shows that Netanyahu's personal ratings among Dem-

ocrats have plummeted during Trump's presidency, along with support for Israel. In 2015, 31 percent of Democrats said they had a favorable view of Netanyahu, according to Gallup; by August 2018, that had dropped to 17 percent. According to Economist/YouGov polling, the percentage of Democrats who said they considered Israel to be an ally dropped from 31 percent to 26 percent in just six months between December 2017 and May 2018.

The second poll was taken after Trump took two actions celebrated by Netanyahu and opposed by Democrats: abrogating the Iran nuclear deal and moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem. The latter step was widely seen as sabotaging the chances for an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal. According to the Economist/YouGov poll, just 16 percent of Democrats supported the embassy move, while 61 percent opposed it — including 47 percent who did so strongly.

A majority of Democrats still say they believe the U.S. should protect Israel — 54 percent said it was "just as important" or "somewhat important" goal last May. That would not include Omar and Tlaib, both of whom have endorsed the BDS movement — boycott, divestment and sanction of Israel. Only 20 percent of Americans now say they support BDS. But as Netanyahu and Trump collaborate, the attitudes of Democrats seem to be changing fast.

Netanyahu's war with the Democrats extends back more than two decades, and there has been fault on both sides. When Netanyahu ran for prime minister in 1996, Clinton endorsed the more dovish Shimon Peres. After Netanyahu's victory, his first meeting with the White House was rocky. He thinks he is the superpower and we are here to do whatever he requires," Clinton told adviser Dennis Ross.

Netanyahu proceeded to sabotage the Mideast peace process, dragging his feet on every step. His poor relations with Washington were widely seen as contributing to his ouster in a 1999 election. But Clinton failed to close a deal for a Palestinian state, thanks mostly to the intransigence of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. After Palestinians waged a campaign of suicide bombings, and after Arafat's successor, Mahmoud Abbas, turned aside another statehood offer, Israelis voted Netanyahu back into the prime minister's office in early 2009.

Not surprisingly, given that history, Netanyahu was greeted by Obama with suspicion that soon turned to hostility. His administration portrayed the Israeli leader as the primary obstacle to peace while giving Abbas a generous pass for his own intransigence. Netanyahu backed Mitt Romney during the 2012 presidential election. And when Netanyahu came up for reelection in 2013 and 2015, Obama did his best to repeat Clinton's feat of driving him out of office. He failed.

By now, having outlasted Clinton and Obama, Netanyahu seems to have written off the Democrats as losers who can't harm him. His actions suggest a bet that Trump, or someone much like him, will control the White House indefinitely. Or maybe he's simply a short-term tactician. After all, he's simultaneously seeking to vote others and dodge a pending criminal indictment.

Either way, what happens to Netanyahu this spring will have more impact on the Democratic Party's relations with Israel than anything Clinton or Obama did. He remains in office, an already troubled relationship is sure to get worse.

Jackson Diehl is deputy editorial page editor for The Washington Post.

Catholic Church's abuse, cover-ups go way back

By KAREN LIEBREICH

Special to The Washington Post

The Vatican is showing signs of making progress in its halting attempts to address the clerical sexual abuse scandal that has cast a shadow over the Roman Catholic Church for more than two decades. On Saturday, the Vatican announced the defrocking of former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, the former archbishop of Washington, for sexually abusing minors and adult seminarians. McCarrick was expelled from the priesthood just days before leaders of Catholic bishops' conferences around the world met, Thursday through Sunday, at the Vatican for an unprecedented summit on sexual abuse.

Such a reckoning is long overdue, but treating the church's culture of abuse and cover-up as a historical aberration, as a terrible chapter of the modern era, may be a mistake. Today's headlines carry strong echoes of the past, suggesting a historical pattern that must also be confronted if the Vatican is serious about restoring trust, reducing accountability and eliminating the stain of sexual abuse.

I became aware of this history after the Vatican's archives of the Inquisition were first opened to lay researchers in 1998. The Inquisition had been renamed the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1965 in a Vatican attempt to distance the institution from its past reputation as a brutal enforcer of orthodoxy.

Officially, as a doctoral student, I was studying how the 17th-century pedagogical innovations by an order of priests called the Pious Schools formed part of the Counter-Reformation response to Protestantism. Unofficially, I was trying to find out

why the order, founded by Spanish priest Joseph Calasanz, had been suppressed in 1646, just over 20 years after its establishment, a rare fate for a religious order.

Historians who had addressed the suppression — nearly all of them Pietist Fathers, as members of the order were known — said the Pious Schools had been shut down as punishment for the order's close association with the astronomer Galileo, who had been convicted of heresy by the Inquisition in 1633. But after spending several years in the archives researching the Pious School's methods, I came to suspect that the order's suppression owed more to the sexual activities of some of the priests with their pupils than to their scientific iconoclasm.

Calasanz opened his first school, dedicated to providing a free education to boys from poor families, Rome in 1597. More schools soon followed. In 1629, the first accusations of child abuse were made by fellow priests; according to contemporary letters and documents, there were "impure friendships with schoolboys" and "many accusations of impurity and ill-reckon."

Pietist moral reformer, Orlando Ribera, was a particular focus of the accusations. Calasanz wrote to the administrator of a nearby school, whom he had sent to investigate Cherubini, "I want you to know that Your Reverence's sole aim is to cover up this great shame in order that it does not come to the attention of the Holy See."

Cherubini was swiftly promoted by Calasanz, first to rector (the equivalent of headmaster) and then to visitor general (an inspector). Soon, more priestly abusers were discovered, promoted and moved to new schools, in a policy known as promoveatur ut scilicet, or promote to avoid. The rules of the Pious Schools

were unequivocal about the sin involved, but in each case Calasanz's first priority was protecting reputations: the order's and the perpetrator's.

In 1643, Cherubini, by now a known sexual abuser of children, replaced Calasanz, appointed on behalf of and with the knowledge of the papacy, as head of this respected religious order, whose sole mission was to teach young boys. Now headed by a priest with a sordid reputation, the Pious Schools also began to suffer from bureaucratic incompetence, overexpansion and loss of patronage. It was written in a few years of Cherubini's appointment, the order was suppressed. But in the late 17th century, the order of the Pious Schools was allowed to re-establish itself. Famous pupils included Francisco Goya, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Franz Schubert and Victor Hugo.

Calasanz was canonized in 1767, and in 1945, Pope Pius XII named him "Universal Patron of all the Christian popular schools in the world." There is of course an unmissable, grim irony in the elevation of someone who was complicit in the sexual abuse of children as the patron saint of Catholic schools.

How many other episodes like that of the Pious Schools are interred in the Inquisition and Vatican archives? The Roman Catholic Church, dragged by journalists and victims into confronting the modern plague of clerical sexual abuse, may make headway in its effort with the Vatican conference. The gathering's main themes will be responsibility, accountability and transparency. Taking a similar approach to the church's history might shed light on the current crisis and on the path to renewal.

Karen Liebreich is the author of "Fallen Order: Iniquity, Heresy and Scandal in the Rome of Galileo and Caravaggio."

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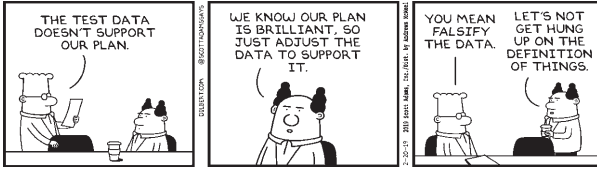


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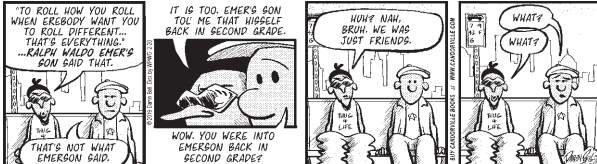
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
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51					52	53						
54					55				56			
57					58				59			

ACROSS

- 1 Landed
- 5 Gearwheel tooth
- 8 Slightly
- 12 Sultry Horne
- 13 "— you serious?"
- 14 Barn roof spinner
- 15 Strict disciplinarian
- 17 Noble Italian family
- 18 Swift
- 19 Sculpted trunks
- 21 Old Olds
- 22 Doctor Zhivago
- 23 Wye follower
- 26 Moreover
- 28 On edge
- 31 Sciences' partner
- 33 Observe
- 35 Campus VIP
- 36 "Hogwash!"
- 38 Finale
- 40 Water tester
- 41 Love god
- 43 Inherited
- 45 Painter's motion
- 47 Reduces
- 51 Nashville's st.
- 52 Instrument in a Dixieland band
- 54 Couturier Cassini
- 55 Stannum
- 56 Pinta's companion

- 57 Favorites
- 58 Norm (Abbr.)
- 59 Vortex

- 25 System for linking computers
- 27 Ruby of films
- 29 — Paulo, Brazil
- 30 Away from WSW
- 32 Island wraps
- 34 Queen's domain
- 37 Stir-fry pan
- 39 Entryway
- 42 Factions
- 44 Packing string
- 45 Halt
- 46 Far (Pref.)
- 48 Author
- 49 Tear
- 50 Remain
- 53 Torched

DOWN

- 1 Charitable gift
- 2 Bound
- 3 Concerning
- 4 Spud
- 5 Big gorges
- 6 Mine yield
- 7 Oil tycoon
- 8 Declared
- 9 Baby's bed
- 10 Division word
- 11 Casual tops
- 16 Notion
- 20 Ump's call
- 23 Hit with a ray gun
- 24 Triage ctrs.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

L	A	M	A	W	O	N	L	O	T	S
A	J	A	X	A	B	E	A	G	R	A
L	A	T	E	S	H	O	W	Z	E	A
A	R	T	P	O	E	M	Y	E	E	
				L	E	O	W	A	S	
M	U	S	I	C	D	I	V	U	L	G
A	S	O	F	H	U	G	S	E	A	S
R	O	S	E	B	U	D	R	A	I	L
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P	L	A	T	E	R	U	M	A	C	E
R	E	M	O	L	U	M	P	S	U	M
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G	O	R	Y	E	D	S	P	O	N	Y

2-20

CRYPTOQUIP

TS J RVVZ FYJE IVFOEYKYED
WJKTWSTYZ J KDPJGGTIJE
PHEYP, DVH FTRCK WJD TK
PYJEED CTK ZYWOK.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: NAME OF A PARTITIONED-OFF SPACE FOR EVERYBODY TO RECEIVE THEIR MANICURES: THE CUTICLE CUBICLE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals D


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	W	L	T
Birmingham	2	0	1,000 38
Orlando	2	0	1,000 78
Atlanta	1	0	500 40
Memphis	0	2	0 000 46

NFL			
	W	L	T
Arizona	2	0	1,000 58
San Antonio	1	0	500 44
San Diego	1	0	500 40
Salt Lake	2	0	0 000 50

Saturday's games			
	W	L	T
Birmingham 12, Salt Lake 9			
Orlando 20, Memphis 18			

Sunday's games			
	W	L	T
Orlando 37, Atlanta 12			
San Diego 24, San Antonio 20			

Saturday, Feb. 24			
	W	L	T
Orlando 37, Atlanta 12			
San Antonio 24, San Diego 20			

Sunday, Feb. 24			
	W	L	T
Orlando 37, Atlanta 12			
San Antonio 24, San Diego 20			

College baseball			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Monday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Tuesday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Wednesday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Thursday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Friday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Saturday's scores			
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Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Sunday's scores			
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Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Monday's scores			
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Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Tuesday's scores			
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Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

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Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
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Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Sunday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Monday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Tuesday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

College basketball

AP Men's Top 25

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, were last week's ranking:

	Record	Pts	Pct
1. Duke (58)	23-2	1594	2
2. Gonzaga (6)	23-2	1594	2
3. Virginia	22-2	1476	4
4. Kentucky	23-1	1362	5
5. Tennessee	22-2	1376	1
6. Nevada	24-1	1240	7
7. North Carolina	23-3	1089	6
8. Houston	25-5	1129	8
9. Michigan State	21-5	1046	11
10. Marquette	21-7	1051	10
11. Kansas	20-6	801	14
12. LSU	21-7	775	15
13. Texas Tech	21-7	775	15
14. Purdue	18-7	699	12
15. Florida State	20-5	525	17
16. Villanova	20-6	519	13
18. Louisville	18-8	507	16
19. Iowa State	19-6	426	23
20. Virginia Tech	20-5	389	21
21. Wisconsin	17-8	250	28
22. Baylor	22-3	164	25
24. Maryland	19-7	211	24
25. Buffalo	22-3	164	25

Saturday's games			
	W	L	T
Birmingham 12, Salt Lake 9			
Orlando 20, Memphis 18			

Sunday's games			
	W	L	T
Orlando 37, Atlanta 12			
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Tuesday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Wednesday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Thursday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Friday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Saturday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Sunday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Monday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Tuesday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Wednesday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Thursday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Friday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Saturday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Sunday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Monday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Tuesday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

Wednesday's scores			
	W	L	T
Alvernia 3, Keen 4			
Stevens Tech 3, Old Westbury 2			

N. Iowa at Missouri St.
W. Illinois at Nebraska-Omaha
Northwestern at Ohio St.
Creighton at DePaul
Butler at Marquette

SOUTHWEST
Nicholls at San Houston St.
Texas A&M at Stephen F. Austin
Northwestern St. at Houston Baptist
Butler at Marquette

WEST
Stanford at Arizona St.
Air Force at Fresno St.
Northridge at Utah State
Colorado at Washington St.
San Jose St. at Col. State
New Mexico at Utah St.
Utah at Washington

AP Women's Top 25

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' women's college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, were last week's ranking:

	Record	Pts	Pct
1. Baylor (26)	23-1	698	1
2. Oregon (2)	24-1	672	1
3. UConn	23-2	638	2
4. Louisville	23-2	638	2
5. Notre Dame	23-2	555	3
6. Mississippi St.	21-4	475	10
7. Stanford	23-2	458	7
8. Maryland	23-2	458	7
9. Nevada	21-5	425	12
10. Iowa	21-5	425	12
11. Marquette	22-4	437	8
12. Oregon St.	21-5	425	12
13. South Carolina	19-6	378	13
14. Gonzaga	23-2	173	15
16. Kentucky	21-5	261	17
17. Arizona	21-5	247	19
18. Syracuse	19-6	232	16
19. Texas	21-5	232	16
20. Iowa St.	19-6	158	25
21. Texas A&M	21-5	106	21
22. Florida St.	23-2	90	25
23. Utah	21-5	40	26
24. Drake	19-5	40	26
25. Rice	22-2	30	29

Others receiving votes: Rutgers, 29; Missouri, 29; West Virginia, 19; Minnesota, 19; Michigan St., 19; Wagner, 6; Clemson, 4; Kansas St., 4; South Dakota, 4; BYU, 4; Florida Gulf Coast, 1; Cent. Mich., 1; DePaul, 1.

Monday's women's scores

EAST
Bryant, 68, Fairfield Dickinson 48
Liu Brooklyn, 69, Sacred Heart 64
Drexel, 68, Penn State, 68
Robert Morris, 66, St. Francis (Pa.) 60
St. Francis (Ind.), 68, CCSU 58

SOUTH
Bethune-Cookman, 68, Savannah 47
Clayton St., 68, Augusta 48
Georgia, 78, Mississippi 56
Grambling St., 73, Prairie View 57
Howard, 80, NC Central 70
Lindsey Wilson, 85, Fisk 51
NC A&T, North Carolina 44

WEST
Notre Dame, 59, NC State 72
SC State, 61, Louisiana 48
Southern U., 67, MSU 46
Spring Hill, 61, Lane 56
UMass, 68, Bethany (WV) 35
Tuskegee, 66, Kentucky 52

SOUTHWEST
N. Illinois, 77, W. Michigan 64
Rutgers, 69, Indiana 67
Ark.-Pine Bluff, 66, Alcorn St. 57
DePaul, 69, (Ind.) 59
Idaho, 75, E. Washington 74
Oregon St., 67, Oregon 62

Women's schedule
Wednesday, Feb. 20
UMBC at Vermont
Boston College at American U.
Loyola (Md.) at Bucknell
Holy Cross at Hartford
New Hampshire at North York
Stony Brook at Albany (N.Y.)
St. Francis (Ind.) at St. Francis (Pa.)
Mass.-Lowell at Binghamton
Boston College at Saint Joseph's
Lafayette at NY
Lehigh at Colgate
Marquette at UConn

SOUTH
South Florida at North Carolina
South Houston St. at Nicholls
Jackson St. at Louisiana
Miami (Ohio) at Toledo
Miami (Fla.) at Bowling Green
Tulsa at Cincinnati
Tulane at Middle Tennessee
Davidson at Dayton
Memphis at UConn
UCF at Wichita St.

WEST
Idaho at Wisconsin
Portland at Weber St.
St. Dakota St.
Tulane at Houston
West Virginia at Oklahoma St.
Kansas at Baylor
Texas Tech at Michigan St.

MIDWEST
Miami (Ohio) at Toledo
Miami (Fla.) at Bowling Green
Tulsa at Cincinnati
Tulane at Middle Tennessee
Davidson at Dayton
Memphis at UConn
UCF at Wichita St.

SOUTHWEST
Idaho at Wisconsin
Portland at Weber St.
St. Dakota St.
Tulane at Houston
West Virginia at Oklahoma St.
Kansas at Baylor
Texas Tech at Michigan St.

Far West
Sacramento St. at Weber St.
San Jose St. at Col. State
Fresno St. at Air Force
Utah St. at New Mexico
Wyoming at UNLV
San Diego St. at Nevada

FAR EAST WRESTLING/TRACK AND FIELD



EMMA STEVENS/Special to Stars and Stripes

St. Mary's Austin Koslow, top, and Yokota's Austin Fisher finished 1-2 in both the Beast of the Far East and the Kanto finals and are considered the favorites in the Far East 180-pound field.

'Anybody's game'

St. Mary's, Kinnick have loosened grip on team title

By DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

For the first time in six years, there appears to be no clear favorite entering this week's Far East wrestling tournament, at least in the Division I field, coaches and observers are saying.

"It's wide open," said Gary Wilson, whose host Kinnick Red Devils swept both D-I individual and dual-meet titles a year ago, but are far from the dominating force they've been in recent years.

After five years of the Red Devils and St. Mary's trading the titles, Far East D-I looks much like the 2013 tournament, "when it was anybody's game," said Wilson, in his ninth season at Kinnick.

"It's a little exciting. It's not just between Kinnick and St. Mary's this year."

Both the Red Devils and Titans had their ranks diminished by transfers and graduations. Kinnick lost 12 seniors and has just one returning champion, Chris Mason at 215 pounds.

St. Mary's also has one returning champion, Eiji Kasahara (115) and six seniors. The Titans had a strong season on paper, winning all Japan tournaments except one and coming in second in the Pacific-wide "Beast of the Far East" tournament, but their team margins of victory were slim.

"St. Mary's has had a little upper hand, they've been solid all season," Wilson said.

But he noted that American School In Japan was right on the Titans' heels in last week's Kanto finals, while Kubasaki took third in "Beast" and swept the regular-season series with Kadena.

Humphreys, meanwhile, went unbeaten in Korea, but against relatively low numbers at the

other Korea schools. And the Blackhawks only had three wrestlers at "Beast"; now, they'll have a full 13.

So who's going to win the whole shooting match?

"Far East has always been a matter of put yourself in position to win, put yourself in position to at least have a shot, and hope for a little magic fairy dust," Wilson said. "You just don't know."

Wrestling begins Thursday morning at Yokosuka Naval Base.

Individual wrestlers compete regardless of division, and team champions are crowned in Divisions I and II. The dual-meet tournament follows, starting Friday afternoon and ending Saturday at Kinnick's gym with the D-I and D-II finals.

Kubasaki, with a record 25 Far East D-I wrestling titles, was the last team other than St. Mary's or Kinnick to win a championship in 2013. Third-year coach Brent Cook says his Dragons "have a shot" at ending that drought.

"I want for my guys to wrestle their matches and not worry about other people," Cook said. Unlike at Beast, when he didn't see the full (Humphreys) team," Cook said. "And we only finished 12 points behind St. Mary's" at "Beast."

Humphreys is in the D-I field for the first time after wrestling five years at D-II.

"I feel confident our guys will do well," Humphreys' coach Ben Pak said. "I don't want to take

anything for granted; this is tougher competition than D-II. Just go out there, think about what we've worked on, give it 110 percent and we'll be OK."

As for D-II, after two down seasons, Edgren, which has a Pacific-record nine D-II titles, appears back in business after having won a dual-meet invitational at Zama earlier this month — the first such victory for Edgren in coach Justin Edmonds' 14 years at the helm.

"I have good kids, they have a good spirit and they have a chance," Edmonds said. "We're going to go after it."

The Eagles might be competitive even if they were in the large-schools field, Wilson said.

"If Edgren was in D-I, they'd have a decent shot," he said. "They're legit. They have a full lineup, and they're good from top to bottom."



Scoreboard

**Far East Wrestling Tournament
At Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan
Thursday-Saturday**
Format — Individual and dual-meet tournament. Team scoring done by divisions; individual bouts conducted inter-division.

Participating teams — Division I: Kinnick, St. Mary's, American School In Japan, Humphreys, Kadena, Kubasaki, Division II: Edgren, Zama, Yokota, Perry, E.J. King, Seoul American, Osan, Daegu.

Returning Far East champions
Caleb Heino, 101; Yokota: Eiji Kasahara, 108; St. Mary's: Kojiro Vanhoose, 122; Osan (two-time champion, won at 108 in 2017); Chris Mason, 215; Kinnick: Marshall China, heavyweight, Perry.

Favorites and contenders
101 — His to lose: Alexi Mutoh, Kinnick (second at Beast of the Far East, Kanto Plain finals champion). In the hunt: Dylan Huddleston, Kubasaki; Mikhail Titov, St. Mary's. Sleeper pick: Manuel Ramos, Kadena (third at Beast).

105 — His to lose: Jordan Van Druff, CAJ (Beast and Kanto champion). In the hunt: Heino (second at Beast and Kanto); Jeremy Cho, Humphreys.

115 — His to lose: Kasahara (second at Zoot, ASJ) (third at Beast, Kanto runner-up); Fuente Pedro, Humphreys; Austin Carpenter, Kubasaki. Sleeper pick: Joe Frazier, CAJ.

122 — His to lose: Harold Mancila, St. Mary's (Beast and Kanto 125-pound champion). In the hunt: Ira Kadei, ASJ (Kanto champion, third at Beast); Jaylen Mayers, Kubasaki. Sleeper pick: Sam Lister, Humphreys.

129 — His to lose: VanHoose (unbeaten in Korea). In the hunt: Kinnick: McDougall, Humphreys; Eiji Kasahara, St. Mary's. Sleeper pick: Ullises Yu, Humphreys. VanHoose could meet McDougall in semifinal.

135 — His to lose: Will Allen, Humphreys (second at Beast, unbeaten in Korea); beat Kanto champion William Kreolic of St. Mary's at Beast). In the hunt: Kreolic; Victor Saavedra, Kubasaki. Sleeper pick: Josiah Millare, Kinnick.

141 — His to lose: Nishant Chanda, St. Mary's (Beast and Kanto champion). In the hunt: Eppan Sadler, ASJ (four-time Beast, second in Kanto); Kristian Irons, Perry (third at Beast); Ben Lister, Humphreys. Sleeper pick: Ethan Hamilton, Kinnick (has beaten both Chanda and Sadler).

146 — Observers say this is the toughest class at Far East. His to lose: Rin Zoot, ASJ (Beast champion, Kanto 158-pound champion, Kanto Outstanding Wrestler). In the hunt: Luke Moseley, Kubasaki (second at Beast); Jaiden Wamman, Humphreys (third at Beast); Ethan Kwonkoter, Edgren. Sleeper pick: Cole Lawler, St. Mary's (Kanto champion). Observer's quote: "Zoot could wrestle at 141, 148, 158 or 180, win the weight class and be named Outstanding Wrestler."

158 — His to lose: Warren Koslow, St. Mary's (Beast and Kanto runner-up). In the hunt: Marcus Inthavak, Osan (unbeaten in Korea); Finton Gaskin, Kadena; James Ahn, Humphreys; Cody Dettman, Edgren; Gavin Jackson, Daegu. Sleeper pick: Marc Morgan, Kinnick (led Koslow 8-0 in one bout).

161 — His to lose: Zenon Sadler, ASJ (Beast and Kanto champion). In the hunt: Bradleigh McCollum, Edgren. Sleeper pick: Dakley Mueller, Kubasaki; Lev Titov, St. Mary's (second at Beast and Kanto). Sadler and Mueller settled to meet in semifinal.

165 — His to lose: Austin Koslow, St. Mary's (Beast and Kanto champion). In the hunt: Chase Quigley, Edgren. Sleeper pick: Jarry Mershan, Osan.

Heavyweight — His to lose: China (Beast champion). In the hunt: Matthew Marshall, Kinnick (Beast and Kanto champion, third at Beast); Desmond Martin, Zama (Kanto champion, third at Beast).

Semenya showdown with IAAF begins

By JAMIE KEATEN
Associated Press

LAUSANNE, Switzerland — The longtime standoff between Olympic champion Caster Semenya and track and field's governing body over issues of gender, hormones and performance in sports reached a pivotal phase on Monday as a key tribunal began hosting a planned five-day hearing in a case that could have massive repercussions throughout sports.

The two-time 800-meter gold medalist from South Africa came and went from the offices of the Court of Arbitration for Sport on Monday without addressing reporters after a marathon opening session, but her legal team and IAAF lawyers were still jockeying for position in the court of public opinion.

Both sides acknowledged that the ruling in the case — which isn't expected until late March — could have huge implications, notably over where to draw the line between the genders and how to ensure fairness in top-tier competition.

Semenya's lawyers issued a statement during the 10-hour session criticizing the IAAF's release of a list of names of five experts that they planned to put forward to make their case. Her legal team said that maneuver violated the spirit of confidentiality over the proceedings "in an effort to influence public opinion."

Her team of four lawyers said that it had received the three-judge panel's OK to release the names of its own experts on Tuesday.

Insisting on the need for fairness, the IAAF defended "eligibility" standards that ensure that athletes who identify as female but have testes, and testosterone levels in the male range, at least drop their testosterone levels into the female range in order to compete at the elite level in the female classification.

The IAAF has proposed eligibility rules for athletes with hyperandrogenism, a medical condition in which women may have excessive levels of male hormones such as testosterone. Semenya wants to overturn those rules.

The scheduled five-day appeal case is among the longest ever heard by the sports court. CAS secretary-general Mathieu Reeb expressed hope for a decision by the three-judge panel by the end of March.

Neither of the delegations spoke on the way out of Monday's proceedings.

The IAAF wants to require women with naturally elevated testosterone to lower their levels by medication before being allowed to compete in world-class races from 400 meters to one mile.

EMMA STEVENS/Special to Stars and Stripes

Defending Far East champion Chris Mason of Kinnick, front, and Edgren's Chase Quigley are contenders at 215.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL



CHRIS SEWARD/AP

Duke's Zion Williamson celebrates after he scored against North Carolina State on Saturday in Durham, N.C. On Wednesday, Williamson faces North Carolina — a team that heavily recruited him.

This week in basketball

Duke, UNC renew rivalry

By JOHN MARSHALL
Associated Press

North Carolina coach Roy Williams set his sights on landing Zion Williamson out of high school, only to see him end up down the road at the Tar Heels' biggest rival.

Williams and the rest of the eight-ranked Tar Heels will get an up-close look at top-ranked Duke's rim-wrecking freshman Wednesday in what's sure to be a foundation-shaking atmosphere at Cameron Indoor Stadium.

"Zion's a different bird, there's no question about that," Williams said on Monday. "We tried to recruit him very hard. He's got a combination of skill set that I've never seen before and there is a lot of attention, but he deserves it. He's backed it up."

Williamson arrived at Duke with plenty of hype, a 6-foot-8, 285-pound force who created a massive following with his head-above-the-rim dunks.

He's exceeded even those lofty expectations by doing the same things to college players that he against high schoolers. Williamson is right behind fellow freshman R.J. Barrett with 22.4 points per game, grabs 9.2 rebounds and often has more highlights in one game than most players have all season.

He's also helped lead the Blue Devils (23-2, 13-1 ACC) to No. 1 in the AP Top 25 for the third time this season.

Since losing to Syracuse on Jan. 14, Duke has reeled off nine straight wins, including a 23-point comeback victory over

No. 18 Louisville. The Blue Devils moved up a spot to No. 1 this week after Tennessee lost to No. 4 Kentucky.

"It's hard to kind of miss the hype they get, just because it's all over the place, but we try not to pay attention to it," North Carolina senior guard Cameron Johnson said. "We go about our own business and we're really confident in the group that we have. But it'll definitely be a big opportunity for us."

The Tar Heels (20-5, 10-2) had a seven-game winning streak ended by No. 3 Virginia last Monday, but bounced back with a rout over Wake Forest.

North Carolina won two of three against their biggest rival a year ago, including the semifinals of the ACC Tournament in New York.

This rivalry is already one of the best in sports and having both teams ranked in the top 10, not to mention playing well, make it must-watch TV.

Rivalry in Michigan

Duke-Charlotte isn't the only rivalry game going on this week.

On Sunday, No. 7 Michigan hosts No. 10 Michigan State with the Big Ten lead likely on the line.

Both enter the week tied for first at 12-3, with No. 15 Purdue a half-game back at 11-3.

The Spartans (21-5) play Rutgers on Wednesday and the Wolverines (23-3) have to get past Minnesota on Thursday, so there's a chance they won't still be tied come Sunday.



No. 8 North Carolina (20-5)
at No. 1 Duke (23-2)
AFN-Sports
3 a.m. Thursday CET
11 a.m. Thursday JKT

Regardless of the records, expect the Crisler Center to be rockin'.

Big Saturday

Saturday features four games between ranked opponents.

No. 12 Kansas faces a big test in its bid for a 15th straight Big 12 title, playing at No. 14 Texas Tech. The Jayhawks enter the week tied with the Red Raiders for second in the conference, a half-game behind Kansas State. Kansas won the first meeting 79-63 at Allen Fieldhouse.

The big game in the SEC pits former-No. 1 Tennessee and No. 13 LSU. The Vols dropped to No. 5 in this week's poll after losing to Kentucky, which lost to LSU earlier in the week.

In the ACC, No. 3 Virginia travels to No. 18 Louisville, and North Carolina hosts No. 16 Florida State.

The Cavaliers bounced back from a loss to Duke with wins over North Carolina, Notre Dame and Virginia Tech to remain within a game of the Blue Devils.

Top 25 roundup

Guy helps No. 3 Cavs past Hokies

Associated Press

BLACKSBURG, Va. — Kyle Guy scored 23 points and it was his big first half that gave No. 3 Virginia a chance to get things right in the second half.

Thanks to Guy's 17 first-half points and some uncharacteristically poor shooting by No. 20 Virginia Tech, the Cavaliers overcame a sloppy start and outlasted the Hokies 64-58 on Monday night, sweeping the season series from their state rivals.

"In the first half, they definitely missed a lot of open looks," guard Ty Jerome said. "They're a great shooting team so we got a little lucky in the first half, and then in the second half I think we did a better job of dialing in, beating handoffs better and we made some adjustments."

Had it not been for Guy, who hit four first-half three-pointers, it would have been a much taller task for the visitors.

"In the first half, they were just missing shots, open shots," Virginia coach Tony Bennett said of the Hokies. "Kyle kept us in it with his three-point shooting. ... We weren't sharp defensively. We were loose with the ball. ... We were too finesse, and then in the second half it turned in the right direction, but his banging shots — he had what, 17 in the first half? — that kept us in it because we were not doing the job."

The Hokies, though, were unable to take advantage. Despite arriving as the third-best three-point shooting team in the country at 41.8 percent, they were 2-for-13 from beyond the arc in the half, which ended with them trailing 32-29. They added their third and last three-pointer of the night 17 seconds into the second half to pull even at 32-all, but fin-

ished 3-for-28 from long range, or just 10.7 percent.

"Tonight just wasn't our night as a team shooting," said Ahmed Hill, who was 1-for-9 from behind the arc.

And Virginia, one of the nation's best at defending against three-pointers, got back to playing its way.

"Offensively, they took their time, they got what they wanted and kind of wore us down," Hill said.

Jerome added 16 points and De'Andre Hunter had 10 for the Cavaliers (23-2, 11-2 Atlantic Coast Conference), who won for the sixth time in their last eight visits to Cassell Coliseum.

No. 22 Wisconsin 64, Illinois 58: Brad Davison scored 18 points, Khalil Iverson added 16 and host Wisconsin held off Illinois.

The Badgers (18-8, 10-5 Big Ten) ground out a win over Illinois (10-16, 6-9) with leading scorer Ethan Happ on the bench down the stretch.

Happ, who averages 18 points, scored just six points on 3-for-7 shooting, was 0-for-3 from the foul line and had three turnovers, including one just before he sat out the final minutes.

No. 23 Kansas State 65, West Virginia 51: Barry Brown scored 21 points and visiting Kansas State remained atop the Big 12 standings.

A 14-0 run midway through the second half, led by a couple of 3-pointers by Xavier Sneed, gave the Wildcats (20-6, 10-3) their sixth straight conference road win.

After shooting poorly in the first half and only holding a two-point lead, Kansas State kept the Mountaineers (10-16, 2-10) at bay with 50 percent shooting in the final 20 minutes.



MATT GENTRY, THE ROANOKE TIMES / AP

Kyle Guy shoots a three-pointer over Virginia Tech's Nickell Alexander-Walker on Monday in Blacksburg, Va.

NHL/SPORTS BRIEFS



TOM GANNAM/AP

Blues goaltender Jordan Binnington makes a save in the first period of a game against the New Jersey Devils on Feb. 12 in St. Louis.

Playing it cool

Blues' Binnington making most of chance

By STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

Jordan Binnington doesn't let much get to him. When junior goaltending coach Greg Redquest put him through the paces of a post-practice skate, he came away seeing the same chill Binnington.

"He doesn't sweat," Redquest said. "He's just too cool."

Binnington is playing cool and has made the St. Louis Blues the hottest team in the NHL. After finally getting his call-up from the minors at age 25, Binnington is 12-1-1 with four shutouts in his first 14 starts and the Blues have won 10 in a row to go from out of the race to firmly in a playoff position.

When Binnington made his first start Jan. 7, St. Louis sat dead last in the Western Conference, nine points back of a playoff spot. The Blues turned to him to make a difference. No pressure, kid.

"With a little bit of pressure comes opportunity, right?" Binnington said. "You try to do your best to feel confident and prepared for the moment, so you just work hard off the ice and on the ice in practice, and when the moment finally comes, hopefully you're prepared. That's the kind of how I looked at it."

It has been a near-perfect look. Binnington has stopped 356 of 380 shots for a 1.58 goals-against average and .937 save percentage. He's the first goalie since Curtis Sanford in 2005-06 with multiple 30-save shutouts.

That kind of play is just what the Blues needed to crawl out of a hole dug before Craig Berube replaced Mike Yeo as coach.

"He's played really well," Berube said. "He's stopped the ones he's supposed to stop, and he's looked really confident in net, and aggressive."

A lack of confidence has never been the problem. Redquest, who coached Binnington for four seasons with the Ontario Hockey League's Owen Sound At-

tack, said the goalie's technique has always been on point, with the need for just a few tweaks here and there.

The mental part of the game was a work in progress. Redquest, who still works with Binnington in the summer, said if a bad goal gets in, sometimes he'd just ask about what Binnington did the previous night to get his mind off it and back on track.

Binnington hasn't allowed many goals, but he has shown an uncanny ability to shake them off, not allowing more than four in a game so far.

"If the puck goes in, it doesn't bother him," Redquest said by phone Monday. "Blue veteran goalie Jake Allen, he plays a little bit deeper in the goal than Jordan. Jordan comes out and challenges a bit more and everything hits him, and it's just hitting him. And he's so patient. He won't overplay anything."

So what took so long for Binnington to get this chance? Mostly a numbers game, with the Blues committed long term to Allen and rotating Brian Elliott, Carter Hutton and Chad Johnson into the crease in recent years.

Binnington bided his time in the American Hockey League, competing and building a friendship with Phoenix Coyote along the way. The two came to blows in a game last year but are now both in the NHL.

"I think we both understood that having that competition is healthy and it pushed us both to be better goalies and learn from each other," said Copley, who is the Washington Capitals' backup. "We had a really beneficial relationship for both of us."

His AHL teammates believed in him, and when Johnson didn't work out and was put on waivers, Binnington got the opportunity he had been waiting for and fit right in with the Blues.

"That's where your surroundings come in," Binnington said. "There's good people around you that can keep you going in the right direction and believe in yourself. If the opportunity came, you want to be prepared for it."

Briefly

Source: Machado, Padres reach deal

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A person familiar with the negotiations tells The Associated Press that All-Star infielder Manny Machado has agreed to a \$300 million, 10-year deal with the rebuilding San Diego Padres, the biggest contract ever for a free agent.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity Tuesday because the agreement was subject to a successful physical and had not been announced. Machado can opt out after five years and become a free agent again, the person said.

Machado's deal, if completed, would be the second-largest in baseball history behind Giancarlo Stanton's \$325 million, 13-year deal signed with the Miami Marlins ahead of the 2015 season.

Speaking at spring training in Peoria, Ariz., Padres executive chairman Ron Fowler said: "We do not have a deal with any free agent player. We are continuing discussions, and that's all we have to say."

Teams draw a distinction between an agreement subject to a physical and a finalized deal.

San Diego is making a stunning move early in spring training for the second straight year after reaching a \$144 million, seven-year contract last February with first baseman Eric Hosmer. The Padres, who have been rebuilding with prospects, have not had a winning season since 2010, and haven't been to the playoffs since

2006 and have never won the World Series.

Machado is expected to fill the team's gaping need at third base. He began last year with Baltimore, was traded to the Los Angeles Dodgers after the All-Star break and struck out to end the World Series loss to Boston.

Jaguars exercise option on DE Campbell

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The Jacksonville Jaguars have exercised a \$12 million option on Pro Bowl defensive end Calais Campbell for 2019.

The team also picked up options on defensive end and special teams captain Lereent McCray and backup safety Cody Davis on Monday.

Campbell signed a four-year, \$60 million contract with Jacksonville in March 2017. The deal included \$30 million guaranteed. He made the Pro Bowl in both seasons with the Jaguars, totaling 139 tackles, 25 sacks and four forced fumbles.

Campbell will count \$14.5 million against the salary cap next season.

The former Miami Hurricanes and Arizona Cardinals star said at the Pro Bowl in Orlando last month that the Jaguars had informed him they planned to keep him around in 2019. The 32-year-old veteran is a team captain and one of the team's most dependable defenders.



JAC C. HONG/AP

A person familiar with the negotiations tells The Associated Press that infielder Manny Machado has agreed to a \$300 million, 10-year deal with the rebuilding San Diego Padres.

MLB

Bochy retiring after season

Giants' manager to step down following 13th year at the helm

By JANIE MCCAULEY
Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Bruce Bochy has always managed with his gut. Those same instincts told him it's nearly time to retire.

Bochy announced Monday this will be his last season managing the San Francisco Giants, his 25th in all as a big league manager.

He told the team before Monday's spring training workout at Scottsdale Stadium.

"In my mind it's time," he said. Bochy, who turns 64 on April 16, had offseason hip replacement surgery that has him moving more swiftly and he insists "the health's great" and didn't factor into the choice.

He begins his 13th season with the Giants. He led the club to World Series championships in 2010, '12 and '14.

"I've managed with my gut. I came up here in 2007 on my gut. So it's a gut feeling it's time," Bochy said. "It's been an unbelievable ride. There's so much in there to be grateful for, with the players, the city, the fans, my ride here. It's my time. I'll stay in baseball and do something. I'm not going too far, trust me. I love this game. It's been in my blood, so sure I'll be doing something in another capacity and I look forward to it."

Bochy came to San Francisco from the San Diego Padres before the 2007 season, in time to

watch Barry Bonds break Hank Aaron's career home run record that August. He managed Matt Cain's perfect game in 2012 and a pair of no-hitters by Tim Lincecum against the Padres in July 2013 and June '14.

"This will give me time to go back and reflect and even watch some games and think about some of these great achievements and milestones these players have reached," Bochy said. "I've always had a deep appreciation for the gifts and talents of these players. I consider myself fortunate to have managed players like a Bonds and Lincecum."

Every other manager with three or more titles has been inducted into the Hall of Fame.

"I haven't even thought about that," Bochy said.

Giants CEO Larry Baer already envisions a place in Cooperstown for Bochy.

"Words cannot adequately express the amount of admiration, gratitude and respect the Giants family has for Bruce Bochy," Baer said in a statement. "His honesty, integrity, passion and brilliance led to the most successful period of Giants baseball in the history of our franchise. He will always be a Giant and we look forward to honoring him and all of his achievements throughout his final season in San Francisco and inevitably in Cooperstown."

Giants Gold Glove shortstop

Brandon Crawford considers himself fortunate to have played for the same manager his entire career.

"That's definitely special. I don't think many guys have one manager throughout their entire career," Crawford said. "Obviously we have this year to take care of first. Hopefully we make it a memorable one for him. A part of what's made him such a good manager over the years is just being able to work with the players he has, whether that's the bullpen or the bench, he always seemed to plug the right pieces at the right times."

Bochy has faced daily questions about his future, and he wanted to address his plans now and avoid distractions later in the season when he hopes to have a contender again following two years out of the playoffs. He intends to stay in baseball.

"It's something I put a lot of thought in it," Bochy said. "There's a lot of things that I look forward to doing, but right now my head's at this moment, hey, I'm going to focus on getting this team ready. I look forward to one more shot, trust me, and us having a big year. I'm all in."

He spent his first 12 seasons as a manager with the Padres from 1995-2006, guiding San Diego to the NL pennant in 1998.

Bochy came to the decision over the winter, but had all but re-



Matt York/AP

Giants manager Bruce Bochy, top, talks with catcher Buster Posey during spring training practice on Wednesday in Scottsdale, Ariz.

alized this would be his last year at the end of the 2018 season. He discussed it with family and the front office.

Executive Brian Sabean was hardly surprised by his dear friend's decision, saying "that's a pretty elite and, as we all know, fast treadmill to now do this for 25 years."

"Two different organizations, four trips to the World Series, you win three, that's pretty elite com-

pany," Sabean said.

Once he's through, Bochy will stick to his simple life of fishing excursions and family.

"I'm not going anywhere. I don't have any cruises planned, trust me, I don't plan on going up Mount Everest. Baseball, that's my life. I'll be around," Bochy said. "I don't have a bucket list. There's no hidden agenda in all this, trust me."

Today: Suzuki's future uncertain

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active career hits leader if he's on the big league roster, seven more than Albert Pujols since Adrian Beltré retired after last season with 3,166 hits.

After the Japan series, it is unclear where or even if Suzuki would fit into a team that is in a rebuild mode with a focus on younger players, and 34 newcomers for the start of camp. And there will be three fewer roster spots after the first games against the A's.

No matter what happens, Suzuki said the Mariners uniform would be the last he will wear in the big leagues.

Dipoto said the team is set with its primary outfielders — Mitch Haniger, Domingo Santana and newcomer Mallex Smith — along with veteran newcomer Jay Bruce, who was expected to float between the corner outfield spots, first base and designated hitter. While Smith is dealing with some right elbow discomfort, manager Scott Servais said the issue isn't serious.

"Today I was talking to Jay Bruce and found out that he's 31," Suzuki said. "He's 14 years younger than me. I was pretty shocked about that."

The Mariners also have Yusei Kikuchi, a 27-year-old rookie from Japan who relishes the opportunity to play with the outfielder he watched growing up.

"One of my goals when I turned pro as time went by was that one day that I would play with players that were kids when I was still playing," Suzuki said. "And right now I'm at the point I'm playing with guys that



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

The Mariners' Ichiro Suzuki waits to take batting practice during spring training on Saturday in Peoria, Ariz.

were in grade school when I was playing here. That was more of a goal that I had, so I think through those years working hard and being able to be where I am today definitely gives me satisfaction."

Suzuki was both the 2001 AL Rookie of the Year and MVP with the Mariners, and won a pair of AL batting titles. After being traded to the Yankees midway through 2012 and playing parts of three seasons in New York, he had three seasons in Miami before 44 at-bats in limited action with the Mariners early last season.

"He'll have as much energy, if not more, than the rest of the guys. It's just how he's wired," said Servais, the manager only six years older than Suzuki. "He's always ready. Our young players are going to be blown away, like this guy is how old, how long has he been doing this? That's why he's the greatest. He's awesome."

Cardinals' Goldschmidt exceeding expectations

By CHUCK KING
Associated Press

JUPITER, Fla. — St. Louis manager Mike Shildt's phone lit up with texts and calls praising the character of Paul Goldschmidt after the Cardinals traded for the slugger first baseman in December.

"A lot of times the hypebole doesn't meet what's real," Shildt said. "In this case it's exceeded it. He's come in and been unbelievably engaging, thoughtful, proactive. He's really smart and he's really dedicated to what we're doing and how we're doing it. He's exceeded expectations already, before we even got on the field."

Goldschmidt has physically been in Jupiter for about 10 days. Mentally, he's been in a Cardinals uniform for months.

Shortly after the trade, he began texting with Cardinals coaches and teammates discussing the finer points of the game, like baserunning and taking leads.

"They are not short conversations," Shildt said. "And they are not forced. He loves it, is my point. He's a baseball guy."

For Goldschmidt, those kinds of offseason chats are the norm.

"Being new, I'm sure they wanted to make sure I got the lay of the land," Goldschmidt said. "Where I was probably the guy reaching out (in Arizona) when we signed the free agents or a new coach came in."

The Cardinals won 88 games last year,

their third straight season missing the playoffs.

St. Louis traded right-hander Luke Weaver, catcher Carson Kelly, minor leaguer Andy Young and a draft pick for Goldschmidt, whom Shildt called one of the "top five players in baseball." Goldschmidt hit .290 with 33 homers and 83 RBIs in 2018. For his career, he's a .297 hitter with 209 homers over eight seasons. The Cardinals hope Goldschmidt will add pop in the middle of the order. A three-time Gold Glove first baseman, Goldschmidt will also stabilize the Cardinals' defense that led the majors in errors.

Shildt is already smiling at the thought of a lineup that features Goldschmidt, Matt Carpenter and a healthy Marcel Ozuna potentially at cleanup.

"I don't have an announcement to make, but I know he's going to hit in the top three," Shildt said of Goldschmidt. "And Carp will hit one, so we can do the math from there."

Goldschmidt took live batting practice with his new teammates for the first time on Monday, the first full-squad workout for the Cardinals.

"He just jumped right in," shortstop Paul DeJong said. "He's part of this group already."

The 31-year-old Goldschmidt has one year remaining on his contract. The Cardinals have expressed interest in signing him to a longer deal.

MLB

Trout mum on contract

By CARRIE MUSKAT
The Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — Los Angeles Angels owner Arte Moreno said the team has had internal discussions regarding a new contract for outfielder Mike Trout, who can become a free agent after the 2020 season.

The two-time AL MVP is owed \$33.25 million in each of the next two seasons, completing a \$144.5 million, six-year contract.

"One of the last interviews I gave I said it's not in the back of our mind but in the front of our minds," Angels Moreno said Monday.

The 27-year-old Trout did not want to discuss his contract situation on the Angels' first day of full squad workouts.

"I enjoy it here. I'm having fun," he said. "Obviously, losing's not fun but I enjoy playing this game. I leave it out on the field every night, every day and I go from there."

Trout has heard from plenty of fans back home in the Philadelphia area about where they'd like



CHRIS CARLSON/AP

Angels outfielder Mike Trout, right, arrives for practice Monday at the team's spring training facility in Tempe, Ariz.

him to play.

"I don't think I went a day this offseason without somebody saying, 'Hey, when are you coming to Philly?'" Trout said. "I can't predict the future. I don't know."

The Philadelphia Phillies have expressed interest in high profile free agents Bryce Harper and Manny Machado.

"I'm an Eagles fan, and I know how we are," Trout said. "If you're going good, we love them. Fans appreciate hustle all the time. They like 100 percent effort. Even if you're struggling, if you show them you're giving 100 percent, they see that and they respect that. I don't know how many times I heard, 'Is Harper coming?' I don't know. It's not a

good direction for baseball when these guys aren't signed."

Moreno is not against long-term contracts. He signed Albert Pujols to a \$240 million, 10-year contract in December 2011.

"If we don't give a long-term contract, Albert doesn't come here," Moreno said. "He's been great for the franchise, a really special player. You try not to go back too far for paying for something he's already done, but you also look at the player and see what he really means to the franchise. We're always trying to sell fan experience. We're not going to win every night but we want to be in a situation where fans come to the ballpark and they get an opportunity to see some of the best players."



NATHAN DENETTE, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Blue Jays infielder Vladimir Guerrero Jr. warms up at practice Saturday in Dunedin, Fla.

Guerrero could start in minors

By MARK DITTLER
The Associated Press

DUNEDIN, Fla. — Vladimir Guerrero Jr. is not worrying about whether he will start the season with the Toronto Blue Jays.

The 19-year-old son of Hall of Famer Vladimir Guerrero is considered the top prospect entering 2019. Yet, it would not be surprising if Toronto kept the third baseman in the minor leagues for the first 15 days and delayed his debut until at least April 12. By denying him 15 days of major league service, the Blue Jays would delay his eligibility for free agency by a year, until after the 2025 season.

"Controlling what I can control and then working hard everyday," Guerrero said through a translator on Monday as the Blue Jays held their first full-squad workout. "Making the best out of it. Trying to get better every day and giving the best of me."

Guerrero hit .402 at Double-A and .336 at Triple-A last year, combining for 20 homers and 78 RBIs.

"Can't relate to being 19-years old and being that even-keeled and cool like that kid is," new Toronto manager Charlie Montoyo said. "I'm impressed to tell you the truth. That's the mark of a star. He's going to be a star someday, as we all know."

Guerrero took part in defensive drills and made several smart plays during a bunting session. He earned a high-five from pitcher Justin Shafer after charging a bunt and picking up the ball barehanded, then making a strong and accurate to first.

In batting practice, Guerrero hit the ball with authority to all fields over 28 swings during six rounds.

"Really talented," Toronto shortstop Freddy Galvis said. "He seems like a really good guy. Good mentality. He's a mature kid. Coming from his father, he was a hard worker. So, he has kind of the same mentality from what I've seen so far."

When asked about being an improved player compared to a year ago, a smiling Guerrero said "wait for the next game and see."

Clark: Teams not justifying prices

With top stars unsigned, union head says fans should question some clubs' efforts

By RONALD BLUM
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Players' union head Tony Clark took the extraordinary step of saying baseball fans should question whether it makes sense to purchase tickets for some teams, responding to Commissioner Rob Manfred's assertion that free-agent players have failed to adjust their economic demands in a market upended by analytics.

Spring training started with some top free agents still at home.

Manny Machado agreed to a deal worth \$300 million on Tuesday, but Bryce Harper, Craig Kimbrel and Dallas Keuchel remain unsigned, creating tension during negotiations on management's proposals for a pitch clock and new limitations on relief pitchers. The union responded with a wider list of plans that include economic initiatives such as expanding the designated hitter to the National League and altering the amateur draft to make rebuilding less appealing.

"Markets change," Manfred said Sunday. "We've had a lot of change in the game. People think about players differently. They negotiate differently."

Clark led negotiations in 2016 for a five-year labor deal. Players have been increasingly outspoken about their unhappiness during a second straight slow free-agent market, one that has seen many veterans take significant pay cuts and others remain without deals.

"Players' eyes don't deceive them, nor do fans," Clark said in a statement Monday. "As players report to spring training and see respected veterans and valued teammates on the sidelines, they are rightfully frustrated by a two-year attack on free agency. Players commit to compete every pitch of every at-bat, and every inning of every game. Yet we're operating in an environment in which an increasing number of clubs appear to be making little effort to improve their rosters, compete for a championship or justify the price of a ticket."

Average attendance has dropped for three straight seasons and last year fell below 30,000 per game for the first time since 2003.

Players rebuffed management's proposal for a pitch clock ahead of the 2017 and 2018 seasons. Management made the unilateral decision to experiment with a pitch clock during spring training. Manfred has said he is reticent to change regular-season playing rules unless players agree.

"Players have made a sincere attempt to engage with clubs on

their proposals to improve pace of play and enhance the game's appeal to fans," Clark said. "At the same time, we have presented wide-ranging ideas that value substance over seconds and ensure the best players are on the field every day. We believe these substantive changes are imperative now — not in 2022 or 2025, but in 2019."

Players have become increasingly outspoken about the slow pace of agreements and have mentioned the possibility of a work stoppage in 2022.

"Everybody sees it. It's obviously not good for baseball," said Los Angeles Angels outfielder Mike Trout, a two-time AL MVP who can become a free agent after the 2020 season.

"You got two of the top guys not signed yet. With teams saying they want to rebuild, why not start with one of the top guys? Manny, Bryce, look at the pitchers out there. It's pretty incredible. It's disappointing for the players. It's good they're standing up for themselves."

The union is concerned that too many teams are rebuilding, trying to emulate the Houston Astros. Houston lost 106 to 111 games in three straight years from 2011-13, earned three straight No. 1 draft picks and won its first World Series title in 2017.

"This narrative that our teams aren't trying is just not supported by the facts," Manfred said. "Our teams are trying. Every single one of them wants to win. It may look a little different to outsiders because the game has changed, the way that people think about the game, the way that people think about putting a winning team together has changed, but that doesn't mean they're not trying."

Chicago Cubs Chairman Tom Ricketts defended his team's decision not to spend money on this offseason's top free agents.

"That's a pretty easy question to answer. We don't have any more," he said. "The fact is that we've been in the top five in spending, in baseball spending, for the last five or six years. We're in the top couple last year. We've put our money back on the field. Unfortunately, you just can't have a high-profile free agent every single year. And part of that is obviously how much it costs, whatever, \$25 million, \$30 million, it's going to cost, plus it's a 10-year commitment. ... As much as I would love to have a great, new exciting player every single season, it just can't happen every year."

Chicago is projected to exceed the \$206 million luxury tax threshold, along with the World Series champion Boston Red Sox and the New York Yankees.

SPORTS



Final season

Giants manager Bochy to retire
at end of year » **MLB, Page 30**

MLB

'It's about today'

At 45, Ichiro back in Mariners' camp
with chance to play again in Tokyo

By STEPHEN HAWKINS
Associated Press

PEORIA, Ariz. — Ichiro Suzuki fluidly went through a variety of stretches on the floor in the Seattle Mariners clubhouse even before going onto the field. Once outside, he smoothly went through fielding, hitting and baserunning drills.

At 45 and in spring training again, Suzuki is working toward the chance to play for his original major league team in his home country.

"Being able to put on the Seattle Mariners uniform as a player, being here the first day, it is just amazing, it is great," Suzuki said through a translator. "Very satisfied with today and how it went, and I'm just going to take it day by day."

The former MVP and 10-time All-Star outfielder is in camp on a minor league deal after serving in a special assistant's role most of last year when he still worked out with the team. If he's healthy, Suzuki will be part of the Mariners' expanded 28-player roster next month for their season-opening two games in Tokyo against Oakland.

"My body really hasn't changed," he said.

Suzuki, who said he took off only two or three days from working out during the offseason, checked in at camp with only 7 percent body fat.

"He looks unbelievable, like he's prepared every minute of every day to get to this time, and it's probably because he has," general manager Jerry Dipoto said. "He's so focused on his goals, and right now his goal is to make sure that he is on that plane when we leave for Tokyo."

Large groups of fans and Japanese media followed Suzuki everywhere he went during the first workout.

When asked how much he looked forward to the Japan series, Suzuki insisted that he's not yet thinking about that. The player with 4,367 career hits — 3,089 in the 18 big league seasons and 1,278 in nine seasons in Japan before that — is focused on his daily work.

"I think a 45-year-old baseball player really shouldn't be thinking about the future. It's about today," said Suzuki, who would be MLB's

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The Mariners' Ichiro Suzuki walks onto a practice field during baseball spring training Saturday in Peoria, Ariz. Suzuki, 45, is in camp on a minor league deal.

CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

Machado reaches \$300M deal with Padres » **Page 29**

